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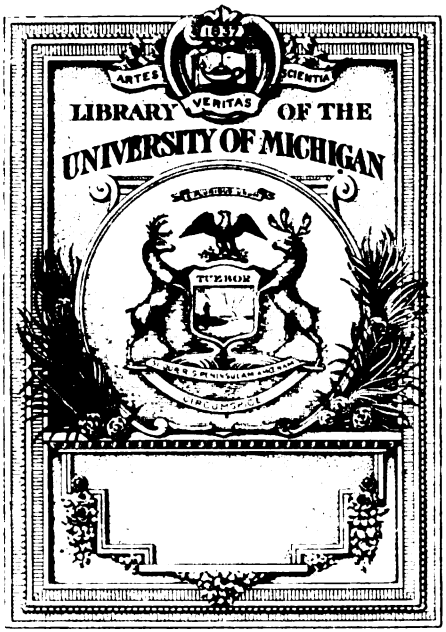

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French Classics for English Readers

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Montaigne

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French Classics for English Readers

Edited by

Adolphe Cohn and Curtis Hidden Page

Montaigne

The Essays

Translated by John Florio

1603

Selected and Edited by

Adolphe Cohn

G. P. Putnam's Sons
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INTRODUCTION

THE year 1800, which was so full of occurrences of the first magnitude in France and Europe, being the first year of the primacy of First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte, witnessed an event of curious importance in the municipal history of the city of Bordeaux. A long and brilliant procession, in which military uniforms were in great prominence, and the national and municipal authorities were surrounded by cavalrymen, artillerists, and detachments of the National Guard, started one day from the old church known as "l'Eglise des Feuillants," escorting a sarcophagus which had just been extracted from the vaults of the church, and wended its way towards the Museum of the city, in which the sarcophagus was to find its final resting-place. The purpose of this imposing ceremony was to do honour to the remains of a former mayor of the city, Michel Eyquem, Lord of Montaigne, the immortal author of the *Essays*, which had been lying in the Eglise des Feuillants since the first of May, 1593, when they had been laid there by order of the great writer's widow.

A few weeks later it was discovered that Montaigne's remains lay still undisturbed in the place provided for them by his widow and that the coffin which had been deposited in the municipal Museum

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contained what was left of Jeanne de Lestounac, one of his nieces.

With what keen delight would Montaigne, if his spirit had preserved the power of expressing itself in that inimitable prose of which he was master, have added this new chapter to his bewildering storehouse of the instances of human fallibility! What irony of fate reserved his own frame and bodily remains for a new demonstration of that which many readers will always consider to be the chief topic of his delightful chatting!

No attempt was made at that time to have the mistake corrected and Montaigne's body remained where it had been lying for over two hundred years. Owing to a conflagration which destroyed the old church in 1871 it was necessary to seek new quarters for the body. It rests to-day in the vestibule of the University of Bordeaux, the main building of which occupies the very spot over which had previously stood the Eglise des Feuillants.

The author of the *Essays* was born on February 28, 1533, in the château of Montaigne, located on the banks of the Lidoire, a small tributary of the river Dordogne, which had belonged to his family for little more than half a century. This is not what Montaigne would have us believe. He seems to think that Montaigne was the patronymic name of the family. Whence the surname Eyquem came he does not know. The fact is that Eyquem was the real name of the family, and that Pierre Eyquem, Michel's father, was the only one of his ancestors born in the château of Montaigne, bought by his grandfather on October 10, 1477.

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The Eyquems were an old Bordeaux family, which, like most rich families of the same city, seems to have owed its wealth to the chief trade of the place, the wine trade. It is not impossible, though it cannot be proved, that the name Eyquem is only another form of the name Yquem, as it appears on the bottles of one of the best known brands of white claret, the Château Yquem. Ramon Eyquem, the purchaser of Montaigne, raised the family to opulence and also improved its social standing by his marriage with Isabeau de Ferraignes. He died just a year after the purchase of Montaigne, which he bequeathed to his oldest son Grimon Eyquem, who also inherited his practical good sense and commercial ability.

With him, however, the commercial existence of the Eyquems ceases. His son Pierre, born on September 29, 1495, was filled with the advent urous spirit of the sixteenth century, and took an active part in the Italian expeditions of King Francis I.

On January 15, 1528, he married Antoinette de Louppes, or Lopez, a young lady belonging to a wealthy family, of Jewish extraction, which had come from Spain to France at a date which has not been ascertained. He had thus risen so far on the social scale that he was soon after chosen *jurat* or alderman of the city of Bordeaux, then, in 1536, Assistant Mayor, and finally in 1554 Mayor of the city, a position which he held for two years. A short while before, he had, it seems, been made by the King one of the members of a Court of Audit, the *Cour des Aides* of Périgueux, a position which

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he may have resigned almost as soon as he occupied it and transferred to his son.

Of Pierre Eyquem, both through what is told of him in the *Essays* and what has been discovered in the Bordeaux municipal Archives, we know that he was a very distinguished man, endowed with a great deal of worldly wisdom, and great strength of character. His chief claim, however, upon the gratitude of posterity lies in the care with which he educated his oldest son.

Michel de Montaigne was not Pierre Eyquem's first-born; two elder brothers of his died in infancy, and he thus became the prospective head of the family, a numerous one, as he had several brothers and sisters.

Among the many traits which seem to have been common to father and son, aristocratic family pride must certainly be reckoned. Montaigne speaks of his family as having for a long time belonged to the nobility, an assertion entirely disproved by an examination of all the original documents. Pierre Eyquem in the same way bestowed a great deal more care upon Michel's education than upon the education given to his younger sons; and it was in no way due to the discovery in him of the remarkable gifts which he displayed in after life, as his peculiar education began, as it were, on the very moment of his birth, and as Montaigne tells us, moreover, that far from being a precocious boy he was rather dull, and in school stood often at the lower end of his class. His studies, however, he completed at an unusually early age, thanks to the curious system of education followed with him even before he was

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able to speak. He was, so he tells us in his celebrated chapter on education, the twenty-fifth of the *Essays*, even then surrounded by people who spoke to him no language but Latin. They were all placed under the authority of his tutor, a German scholar by the name of Horstanus, who later became one of the teachers in the Collège de Guyenne.

In this college, in which the municipality of Bordeaux took great pride, and for the improvement of which Pierre Eyquem had zealously laboured when Assistant Mayor of the city, young Michel was placed when only six years of age, in 1539. He remained there seven years, under the discipline of one of the greatest educators of the time, a Portuguese by the name of Andrea de Govea, or Andreas Goveanus, who was surrounded by a number of great and brilliant scholars, among whom appeared soon after the famous and infamous Marc Antoine Muret, whom Montaigne later met again in Rome whither he had fled after his existence had very nearly come to an ignominious end in France. But these things happened in the sixteenth century, when for the sake of excellence in classical learning people were willing to condone moral delinquencies even of the most serious nature.

No investigator has thus far been able to discover how Montaigne spent the years that intervened between his leaving college in 1546 and the year 1554 in which he became one of the members of the *Cour des Aides* at Périgueux. In his *Essays*, in which he so freely gives information about his life, he is silent on the subject of that period of eight years. Only one thing is certain; as the position

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to which he was called in 1554 required a good deal of legal knowledge, he must have studied law, and it is very likely that his professional knowledge was acquired in Toulouse, which had then, as it still has, one of the most celebrated schools of jurisprudence in France.

The *Cour des Aides* of Périgueux was abolished in 1557, and merged in the Parliament of Bordeaux. It has often been pointed to as a singular coincidence that the two greatest writers given by Gascony to France, Montaigne and Montesquieu, whose birthplaces almost join each other, were both for a time, one in the sixteenth, the other in the eighteenth century, members of the highest court of justice of the province, for this is exactly what the Parliament of Bordeaux was.

With this court Montaigne remained associated thirteen years. As far as we may judge by the text of the *Essays*, he was not especially interested in the kind of work that had to be performed by the court, or, with a notable exception, with the men with whom his judicial position placed him in daily contact. Lavish as he usually is of details about his life experiences he is almost silent about his career as a judge. His passage through the Parliament of Bordeaux one might believe to have been almost forgotten by him but for the fact that it is among his associates in this court that he found the friend to whose memory are devoted the most eloquent pages, the most touching and sentimental chapter of his book, Étienne de la Boétie.

The two friends were almost exactly of the same age; La Boétie was slightly the older, a little more

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than two years. He was born in Sarlat, not very far from Montaigne's birthplace, in 1530. Their intimacy lasted only four years, as they met first in 1559, and La Boétie died in 1563, but its imprint in Montaigne's heart lasted as long as his life. Whether La Boétie deserved all the high praises bestowed upon him by Montaigne in his *Essays* is a question that cannot be settled. His literary remains consist mainly of his remarkable treatise on voluntary servitude, written, it seems, when he was only eighteen years of age,—Montaigne says sixteen, wishing to deprive it of any deep significance and to present it as only a youthful and sophomoric exercise,—and of the twenty-nine sonnets inserted by him in his book after his celebrated chapter on Friendship. The great promise held out by the treatise was not redeemed in after years, but it must be remembered that when La Boétie died he was not quite thirty-three years old; had Montaigne died at the same age he would have left behind him no literary baggage at all, as the composition of the *Essays* was not begun before he reached the age of thirty-eight. La Boétie, moreover, being thoroughly filled with the spirit of the Renaissance had given a good deal of his time to translating from the Greek, especially from Xenophon, and besides, unlike Montaigne, he found a very congenial, and therefore absorbing, occupation in his judicial duties. The testimony of others, however, though, of course, not so enthusiastic as that given by Montaigne, far from contradicts it, and there is no reason why we should not join his friend in bewailing his untimely death as having deprived the world of masterpieces

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that would rival in perfection the productions of classical antiquity.

In 1565, Montaigne married Françoise de la Chassagne. The lady's family belonged to the same social class as the husband's; one of her relatives sat in the same Parliament as Montaigne; the family was wealthy; in every worldly way it was what is called a good match; a love match it was not. This did not in the least deprive Montaigne of whatever measure of happiness one may find in wedlock. He does not consider love a necessary concomitant of marriage; and, moreover, until he met Mademoiselle de Gournay, and this was very late in life, the inferiority, or, as he says, the insufficiency of women, was a belief too firmly established in his mind to have allowed him to be bound to one of them by as strong and tender a tie as had united him to the friend he was still mourning.

What sort of a husband Montaigne was we may surmise more than we exactly know; he much more lavishly informs us in regard to all other kinds of human intercourse, friendly, filial, even love, provided it be outside of wedlock. Of his strong attachment to his father a striking proof was given by him a few years later. In 1568, Pierre Eyquem died, while in his seventy-third year, and a year later, as a tribute to his memory, Michel de Montaigne published his first work, a translation of the *Theologia Naturalis* of the Spanish writer Raimundus Sebondus, undertaken by him at the request of his father. Of the affection and reverence in which he held the memory of his progenitor ample testi-

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mony will be found in Chapter XXV of the *Essays*, on the Institution of children.

Pierre Eyquem's death was soon followed by an event of capital importance in Montaigne's life. Although the duties of his judicial office were decidedly irksome to him, while his father lived he had shown no desire to sever his connection with the Parliament of Bordeaux. Like many of the high bourgeois of France, Pierre Eyquem had energetically striven to shift the basis of the family's greatness; from commercial he made it military and governmental; and in his success in this direction he took evidently the greatest pride; and it cannot be said that this feeling was not shared by his son. Had we had no other source of information about his family than the *Essays* themselves we would not have suspected him of having sprung from a race of merchants. It took years of investigation to discover that Julius Cæsar Scaliger was not altogether guilty of slander in his famous statement that Montaigne's escutcheon was slightly redolent of salted herring. But the pride he took in raising, and even magnifying, the social standing of the family was counteracted in him by love of ease and self-indulgence, traits which seem to have had no place in Pierre Eyquem's nature. As soon, therefore, as his father was dead, he formed the purpose of freeing himself from all active duties of a public nature. The natural tendencies just now alluded to, moreover, received additional strength from a consideration of the circumstances through which France was then passing. The country was torn by religious dissensions; untold cruelties were committed

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both by Catholics and Protestants, some urged by fanaticism, others merely using religion as a cloak for their worldly ambition. No public man could expect to be able to steer long without being compelled to side with one or the other party. That Montaigne in those troublous times knew which way he wanted France to go is perfectly clear to any careful reader of the *Essays;* in order to save trouble he was willing to go a long way, but not as far as the stake, nor was he disposed to do anything that would endanger his "seigneurie" of Montaigne.

Retreat seemed to him the only road to safety and, in 1571, he relinquished his seat as member of the Bordeaux Parliament. Thenceforth he would live away from the turmoil of the world, in the most secluded part of his castle, where he might enjoy the placid but far from silent companionship of his books.

The object which he had in thus shaking off any obligation to act he strikingly describes in his chapter on Solitariness. "We should," he writes, "reserve a storehouse for ourselves, what need soever chance; altogether ours, and wholly free, wherein we may hoard up and establish our true liberty, and principal retreat, and solitariness; wherein we must go alone to ourselves, take our ordinary entertainment, and so privately, that no acquaintance or communication of any strange thing may therein find place; there to discourse, to meditate and laugh, as without wife, without children and goods, without train or servants; that, if by any occasion they be lost, it seems not strange to do without them."

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Montaigne when he thus withdrew from the field of public activity and threw off the yoke imposed by any regular occupation was only thirty-eight years old, a rather early age for the purpose he had formed of devoting his remaining years to meditation upon other people's doings and to self-examination. Comparatively young as he was, his experience of life was already rich and varied, and his acquaintance with the masters of historical literature and moral philosophy had enabled him to expand it considerably.

His withdrawal from the world was complete. He not only gave up his city residence in order to live henceforth in his château of Montaigne, but even in his château he found too much contact with the practical concerns of life. With the cares that are entailed by the management of an estate and by husbandry he had but little sympathy. He felt at home only when he could be all alone. In his spacious library and in a smaller room, connected with it, both located in an upper story of his castle's tower, he found the quiet and liberty he needed for his favourite, shall we say pastime or occupation? the exercising of his thinking outfit. Paintings on the walls, sentences, Latin most of them, extracted from some of his favourite books, on the protruding beams of the ceiling, helped his eyes and mind to transport him into a world entirely his, in which he could, for a while at least, forgét the ferociousness of the age in which it had been his unfortunate lot to be born.

But even there he could not keep entirely away the rumour of the outside world. The massacre of

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St. Bartholomew's night (August 24, 1572), which occurred hardly a year after his resignation of his seat in the Parliament of Bordeaux, resulted in uprisings of the Protestants in all the provinces of the kingdom. Montaigne, while abhorring fanaticism and religious intolerance, was no believer in insurrection and revolution as a cure for the ills of the social body. With most of the loyal nobility of the province he repaired to the headquarters of the Duke de Montpensier, who commanded for the King, and in May, 1574, rendered signal service to the royal cause by his acceptance and successful carrying out of a mission from the duke to his former colleagues of the judiciary in Bordeaux.

While taking sides in critical moments, however, he was in no sense a party man. Though obeying the King, as the guardian of the national tradition, he refused to see an enemy in the brilliant leader of the Huguenots, Henry of Navarre. By the former he was made a Knight of the Royal Order of Saint Michael, by the latter one of the Gentlemen of his bedchamber. These honours were not unwelcome, the kind of activity which they rewarded was not distasteful to Montaigne. In less troublous conjunctures he might have been inclined to devote a much larger share of his time to the service of the public, in war as well as in peace. What little he achieved in this direction he did in no perfunctory manner. But the danger of being drawn into the vortex and so losing all power of free, independent judgment determined him to withdraw again from the field of action as soon as he could honourably do so, as soon especially as he felt that the power

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of the King, whom he considered the guardian of the nation, was no longer in danger of being overturned in the province in which he lived. He returned to his books and his thoughts, soon to find in their companionship the source of a new and much more congenial occupation, which he was to pursue till the end of his life, the composition of the *Essays*.

The first edition of this celebrated book was published in 1580, at Bordeaux. Compared with the present text of the *Essays* it is very incomplete. It consists of two instead of three books, and these two books contain a great deal less matter than do the first two books of what we call the complete edition. Montaigne himself superintended the publication of at least three, possibly four, other editions, the editions of 1582, 1587, and 1588, the last one being called by him the fifth edition. As we have no reason for thinking that Montaigne made any mistake in numbering the editions of the only work published by him we must conclude, strange as it may appear, that of one edition, published very likely between 1582 and 1587, not a single copy has been preserved, or at least discovered, up to the present day.

The bibliographical problem is even more curious than here stated. For many reasons the edition of 1587 is usually considered spurious. One of the reasons is that shortly after its publication, *i. e.*, in 1588, Montaigne himself published in Paris, in a quarto volume, a new and greatly enlarged edition, consisting of three books with, it is so stated by Montaigne himself, more than six hundred additions

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to the first two books. As Montaigne calls this edition the fifth, and is not likely to have included in his reckoning an edition repudiated by him, we must admit the possibility of there having been two editions, and not simply one, of which no copies are known to exist to-day.

Montaigne published no other editions of the *Essays*, but he kept on developing them, and when he died, in 1592, had jotted down on a copy of the 1588 edition, perhaps on two, a number of additions and corrections which were to be used whenever the time seemed to have come for a new edition. According to directions left by the writer and followed by his widow, this edition, which appeared three years after his death, in 1595, was prepared by a young woman of thirty, Mademoiselle Marie de Jars de Gournay, whom Montaigne in the last three or four years of his life had been in the habit of calling his "fille d'alliance," his chosen daughter, and by Pierre de Brach, another of his friends.

This, until quite recently, was considered to contain Montaigne's final utterances on the various subjects treated in the *Essays*, and Mademoiselle de Gournay's is the text followed by the ablest editors. But a new edition is coming forward, with a new version, which is a faithful reproduction of the copy of the 1588 edition enriched by Montaigne's own annotations, perhaps the copy used by Mademoiselle de Gournay, perhaps another one, which is now in the possession of the Bordeaux municipality, and which is unquestionably the copy presented by Montaigne's widow to the church in which her husband's body had been buried. Pro-

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fessor Fortunat Strowski, of the University of Bordeaux, has just published the first of the four volumes of which this edition will consist, in which Montaigne's real annotations to the 1588 edition will be found, not incorporated in the text, as in Mademoiselle de Gournay's edition, but just as they were left by the writer's own hand when death finally put an end to what had been to him a labour of love for the last twenty years of his life.

Such is, in brief, the history of the publication of the *Essays*. Montaigne, it will be seen, from the day he began his work never ceased to give it part of his time until he died. And when the nature of the book is understood, the impossibility for him to cease working on it at once becomes apparent. What did Montaigne undertake when he began writing his *Essays?* He was alone in his library, away from the turmoil of human affairs, intensely interested, however, in every manifestation of human activity. Man seemed to him the chief source of interest on earth; all that he does, all that he says serves to explain his real nature; but he is so full of contradictions and life so full of variety, that the study can never be completed. Man may be studied in the present, that is in real life, or in the past, through the books of the most trustworthy writers. Montaigne, when he retired to his château, had already lived a sufficiently eventful life to find plenty of food for philosophising in the occurrences of his own and other people's careers which he could remember. Then he was surrounded with books, especially with books of history, his favourite ones, so he says in his *Essay*

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on Books, and therein he could find recorded nearly the whole history of mankind. The events themselves, the demeanour of the actors, the writer's mode of presentation of the facts, the motives ascribed by him to the characters whose deeds he reports, everything is for Montaigne an occasion of comparison with what he finds in himself, and this comparison is for him the chief text to which everything must be submitted, for he holds all men to be essentially alike and to possess in embryo all the possibilities of human nature. Thus his opportunities for reflection grow as his reading enlarges and also as his experiences in life develop.

Had Montaigne said, when he retired to his estate, a final farewell to the world, his stock of observations might have become exhausted and ceased to provide him with material for his speculations. He seems to have realised this himself, for four months after the first publication of the *Essays*, on June 22, 1580, he left the château of Montaigne with the purpose of seeing new lands and new people, new people especially. His absence from his home lasted no less than seventeen months. He first went to Paris, where he appeared in the court of King Henry III., who always treated him with a good deal of consideration and from whom it would have been easy for him to receive offices of emolument and importance, had he not determined to keep away, if possible, from the struggle of parties which neither gave nor expected mercy. Then he set out for his travels, recently made known in all their details by the publication of his *Journal*, visiting first the watering-place of Plombières where he

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hoped to find relief for his bodily ills, then Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, everywhere observing men, conversing with them, and enriching his storehouse of human experiences.

Montaigne was in Italy, drinking the waters at Della Villa, not far from Lucca, when on September 7, 1581, letters were handed to him that disturbed him greatly. He was informed that on August 1st preceding he had been elected Mayor of Bordeaux. The success of his book had made him illustrious and caused the members of the municipal corporation to give him their votes. Thus, by one of these jokes of Fortune which he so loved to discourse about, he was recalled to the world of action as a consequence of the very efforts he had made to withdraw from it.

He strongly wished to decline the office. An autograph letter from King Henry III. made it impossible for him to do so without taking the attitude which was most distasteful to him, that of a rebellious subject. He submitted to the inevitable, tarried a while longer in Italy, paid a last visit to the Eternal City, which had strongly intrenched itself in his affections, and wended his way towards Montaigne, which he re-entered on November 30th. A few days later he repaired to Bordeaux of which he had already been Mayor nominally for more than four months.

Montaigne's election to the chief magistracy of the Bordeaux municipality was due, in part at least, to the fame just acquired by him through the publication of the *Essays*. His predecessor, who wished to be continued in office, was a man high in

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the councils of the State, and also one of the greatest noblemen of the province, no lesser a man than the celebrated Marèchal de Biron, and the members of the municipal corporation, who feared the intriguing spirit of the old warrior, were more than pleased to find among their townsmen (Montaigne had never entirely severed his connection with Bordeaux) a man of sufficient celebrity to justify his choice even against such a competitor. Bordeaux, moreover, like a number of other cities in France, was exposed to a double danger from which more than by anybody else it could hope to be extricated by a man of such moderate views as Michel de Montaigne. Though for the time being hostilities had been practically suspended between Catholics and Protestants, a renewal of the internal strife was always to be feared. The dangers against which the loyal citizens of Bordeaux wished to guard were on one side the handing of the city over to the Protestant party, ready to rebel against the King in the name of the new religion; on the other, the handing of similar advantages to the extreme Catholic party, the party of the Catholic League, ready to go to as great lengths in the name of the old faith as the Huguenots in the name of the new. Montaigne believed neither in rebellion nor in persecution. He was essentially the safe man that was required by the situation. He was trusted by the King no less than by his townsmen and mistrusted only by the breeders of mischief. What suited him no less than those who had elected him, however, was that no immediate outbreak seemed likely to occur and that for a while at least each party

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seemed to be upon its best behaviour. Thus it happened that Montaigne was congratulated upon his election both by the Catholic King of France, Henry III., and by the great leader of the Huguenots, King Henry of Navarre.

The main task of the Mayor consisted in acting in such accord with the royal military commander that no chance be left to the extremists of either party to use the material resources and the strength of the city in the interests of one faction or of the other. So successfully was this duty performed that when Montaigne's term of office came to an end, on August 1, 1583, he was elected to be his own successor. Things had worked so smoothly, on the whole, during the two years just passed that whatever misgivings may have existed in Montaigne's mind when he was first chosen Mayor of the city, whatever hesitations he may have experienced at the time of his first election, his second election was accepted by him as a compliment to which he was entitled and which could not possibly become a source of embarrassment to him.

The era of good feeling, however, was soon to come to an end. Fortunate it was for the Mayor of Bordeaux that the King had then there as his military representative a man of such unobtrusive firmness as the Maréchal de Matignon. All that Montaigne had to do was to acquiesce in the measures of the King's lieutenant, with whom he acted in perfect harmony without ever being put to the trouble of originating any policy of his own, which suited his temper admirably.

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But successful as it was from a political point of view, Montaigne's second term as Mayor came to an end under circumstances most painfully distressing to the city and which have left upon his name something like a stain.

As a rule the then Mayor of Bordeaux did not live in the city of which he was the chief magistrate. He betook himself there when concerted action with the King's lieutenant or some great public function seemed to require his presence. Otherwise he preferred to reside in his dear patrimonial estate at Montaigne. Thus it happened that he was not in the city when Bordeaux, in the spring of 1585, was suddenly visited by the terrible pestilence which claimed thousands and thousands of victims through the whole of Southern France.

No admirer of Montaigne, without contradicting every form of evidence at hand, can so magnify his very real virtues as to find in him the soul of a hero. His conduct under the circumstances was what was to be expected from him. He did not rush to the afflicted city. He moved to a spot as close to it as he thought convenient for his own safety and thence wrote to the *jurats*, a kind of board of aldermen in which was vested the real administration of the city, asking whether they considered his presence in Bordeaux absolutely necessary. The asking of such a question was equivalent to dictating the answer to it. Montaigne's second term was getting near to its close and the 31st of August found him still outside of the walls.

No man has ever given of himself so full and accurate a picture as Montaigne. He represents

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himself as devoted to the public weal, but not so far as to incur the risk of destruction either for his person or abode. This risk, however, he had to run, as the pestilence, after visiting Bordeaux, spread through the whole neighbourhood, until even the castle of Montaigne ceased to be a safe place in which to remain. Then Montaigne moved out and wandered from place to place until at last the fury of the scourge abated and allowed him to return to his home and his books.

Foreign travels and public office had been to him what they could not fail to be to a man of his cast of mind, a school, a source of innumerable reflections upon the conduct of man. A keen observer of all that was going on around him he at once set to comparing it with the behaviour of men in other times and under other climes such as reported by his favourite authors.

For the preservation of such reflections Montaigne had prepared a safe and eminently convenient repository, his book of *Essays*, the very absence of plan in which enabled him to tuck any new observation of his in some commodious corner. The period that followed his going out of office and his return to Montaigne was mainly devoted to a considerable enlargement of the already celebrated volume. The result of this labour was the edition of 1588 with its additional third book no less than six hundred additions to the original first two books. This made a journey to Paris necessary. Montaigne started on his eventful voyage early in the year 1588. Seldom has France been so torn by internal dissentions. This was the

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time of the war known in history as the war of the three Henrys, a war due primarily to religious passions, but in which the leaders were clearly actuated by political ambition much more than by religious fervour. Montaigne was not then compelled to take sides, fortunately for him. He was on excellent terms with each one of the three Henrys, King Henry III., Duke Henry of Guise, leader of the Catholic League, and King Henry of Navarre, head of the Protestant interest. To be of no party at all, however, might be in some occurrences as dangerous as any other attitude. This was experienced by Montaigne at least twice; first when, while on his way to Paris, he was overtaken by a party of Leaguers who possessed themselves of all his cash and even robbed him of his precious manuscript of the *Essays*, which, however, they almost immediately returned to him as, very likely, of no value to them; second, when on the 10th of July, 1588, being in Paris, from which the King of France had been driven by the Catholic mob and the Duke de Guise, he was arrested and taken to the Bastile. But this time again his peril was of short duration. The Queen's mother, the celebrated Catherine de Medicis, who still retained a great influence upon the leader of the League, prevailed upon him to restore to freedom a man from whom really he could not fear any act of real hostility.

Montaigne did not return home immediately after the publication of his enlarged *Essays*, which had taken place in June, 1588. Careful as he was not to be dragged into the whirlpool of political strife, he was intensely interested in what was going on on

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the public stage. The life of a man of action would not, at other times, have displeased him. So much is confessed by him in the *Essays*. Only the fierceness of the times in which he lived drove him to the seclusion of his library. Had the condition of France been one of internal peace and obedience to law, perchance the *Essays* would never have been written. But though out of the stage himself, he loved to watch the acting of others, and splendid opportunities for observation were just then presented to him.

On the 15th of October, 1588, the States-General met for the second time at Blois. There the game of politics was to be played with the utmost skill by most of the leading actors. There Montaigne repaired, not in any official capacity, yet keeping in close contact with the wisest advisers of the Crown, such men as Étienne Pasquier and the historian De Thou. The date of his leaving Blois and of his return to Montaigne is not exactly known. Yet we may surmise that he did not remain long after the assassination of Henry de Guise, a murder committed in consequence of orders given by the King himself, had shown him that violence and not wisdom would be the arbiter between the contending factions.

A few months later the death of the Duke de Guise was avenged by the murder of King Henry III. Clearly these were not fit times for Montaigne again to come out of his retirement. His vision, however, was cheered by one gleam of hope. In the new King, whom when King of Navarre he had entertained in his castle, he had discerned a man to

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his liking. His letters to Henry IV. are not only of a loyal subject but of a wise adviser and almost enthusiastic adherent. But he could not be induced once more to relinquish the companionship of his books. In his life thenceforth no event of any importance occurred until his death, which occurred too early for him to see the ardently-desired-by-him triumph of the tolerant King.

He met death with fortitude, and also as a devout son of the Church, on the 13th of September, 1592. In his family only women survived him—his wife, his daughter Leonor, who had been married a little over two years, and a granddaughter, Françoise de La Tour, born on March 31, 1591.

Another woman, whom he called his "fille d'alliance," Marie de Gournay, also survived him. She had met him, not by accident, but with the purpose of expressing to him her admiration for his work, at the time of his last visit to Paris, and this meeting was followed by an intellectual intimacy of such a close character that no other person could be thought of as likely to give to the world the kind of edition of the *Essays* that was sure to be needed after the author's death. The book is one that could not be considered finished as long as its author lived and was able to think. It is the record of a life jotted down according to the mental stimulus given daily to the thinker by both internal and external events. The edition of 1588 had been followed, just as it had been preceded, by a host of new observations. To Mademoiselle de Gournay's lot it fell to incorporate these in the body of the *Essays*, and to enable the reading public to know

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the last that had come from one of the keenest, subtlest, and clearest observers of others and self that the world has ever known. This was done in the edition of 1595.

Attention hardly needs to be called to the success of Montaigne's *Essays*. Few books have been so extensively read and have so fully preserved their hold upon the reading public. They occupy a place second to none among the productions of the literature of France which have been, as it were, naturalised by translations outside of France. And they have not only been read because of their power to charm by the simple, unaffected, unpretentious and complete picture of a human soul, by a style full of ingenious turns and graceful imagery, they have been discussed as one of the most fascinating enigmas in the intellectual history of Man.

We see the man, we hear him, we stop in our busy life in order to listen to his delightful tales of himself. But what do we think of him when we leave him, or rather what does *he* think? What does he believe in, if, indeed, he does believe in anything? Is he one of the great doubters in the history of mankind? Does he believe, or does he not, in the power of human reason? Is he, as some would have us believe, one of the ancestors of modern liberalism, or was his mind incapable of considering any doctrine worth fighting for? From Pascal in the seventeenth century down to Emerson in the nineteenth those have not been wanting who have seen in Montaigne the most fascinating incarnation of scepticism. Is his conclusion upon everything an unanswered "What do I know?"

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Does his head rest forever upon this pillow of doubt and incredulousness to which he has alluded? Let us see.

We have in the preceding pages given an outline of Montaigne's existence because his life, it seems to us, is the best explanation of his book. Outside of the latter half of the Sixteenth Century Montaigne would have been a very different man and would have lived and spoken as another man. He can be understood and fully appreciated only when viewed in contrast with an age in which human passions rose almost to unexampled ferociousness, in which slight differences in philosophical and religious beliefs were held to justify almost any act of inhumanity between man and man. In our modern democracies we are not surprised when we come across men who, in order to preserve their freedom of mind, to be sure of never running into excesses, refuse, in spite of their interest in political questions, to join any political party.

Such a man Montaigne was in the religious strife of the Sixteenth Century. The lesson taught by him is simply that there is another side to every question, and that man can never be so sure of holding to the truth as to justify him in inflicting cruel sufferings upon those who disagree with him. But let him touch some other subjects than those for which men were destroying each other with such strong confidence in the holy uprightness of their doings, and we hear Montaigne speaking in no uncertain tones.

First of all, he believes in the liberty of conscience, but he is careful not to make it, as was

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done later by the French philosophers of the Eighteenth Century, an inherent right of human nature. He is satisfied with showing persecution to be a very bad and ineffectual method of spreading the truth and extirpating heresy. He believes, in France at least, as a result of his researches in French history, in upholding the power of the Kings. He considers rebellion and revolution to be a very bad way of curing the evils of the State. As against revolutionists he is a Conservative; as against what the French call reactionaries, he is a Liberal. He is in favour of human penal laws. He condemns torture in almost unmeasured terms as the worst possible method to follow in trying to ascertain the truth in criminal cases. He believes in reforming education and making the teacher not, as was so often the case in his time, the tyrant, but the best friend of the young.

Where did he stand in regard to the religious questions of his time? He was born a Catholic; he remained a Catholic; not that he considered the Catholic interpretaton of the Scriptures or the Government of the Catholic Church any better than what was found among the Protestants. He, who spoke of everything else, has no word upon this subject, which he held not worth fighting for. But the Huguenots were the subverters of the State and therefore not entitled to his support.

Where did he stand in regard to philosophic truths? Here no hesitation is possible. The question of divine existence is not discussed by him because reliance upon a Supreme will permeates,

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as it were, all his utterances relating to the great questions of human conduct upon earth.

If Montaigne was a sceptic, how does it happen that his code of morals almost completely agrees with the system of morality prepared for his own use by Descartes, the most dogmatic of French philosophers? Descartes believed in obeying the laws of the land: so did Montaigne. Descartes believed in remaining in the religion of one's birth; so did Montaigne. Descartes believed in following, in questions of conduct, the most moderate opinions, those most removed from extremes; so did Montaigne.

Finally, Descartes believed in conquering one's self rather than trying to conquer fortune, and this is the very soul of Montaigne's system of life which, while shrinking from heroism, no less, moreover, than Descartes himself, who destroyed all references to the movement of the earth in his works, in order not to meet Galileo's fate, infuses into Epicurism enough of the doctrines of the Stoics to have enabled him to pass with pure hand and heart through a terrible period of lust, greed, cruelty, and ambition.

The extracts here presented to the public are deemed to be fairly representative of Montaigne's life work. Each one of the essays reproduced is presented in its entirety, save the *Essay on Friendship* in which a passage has been omitted decidedly unsavory for the modern readers. Nothing is here presented of the Third Book of the *Essays;* not that it be decidedly inferior to the other two, but because its interesting chapters are

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so long that they would have forced too much out of a book of moderate compass.

The translation used is John Florio's. Florio had the advantage of being a contemporary, though a younger one, of the author of the *Essays*. Cotton, who wrote later, claimed to be, and to some extent was, more accurate. But he is decidedly a seventeenth-century man and his English would not, as Florio's does, produce upon the English reader of to-day the effect produced upon the French reader by Montaigne's own French.

Florio's translation is marred by two faults. It is a trifle too wordy, having often two expressions for Montaigne's one, and it contains a number of inaccuracies due, no doubt, to Florio's too hasty reading of the text. In the present volume the inaccuracies will be found corrected at the foot of the page.

Florio's translations from the Latin are his own. In the French text the Latin passages are not translated. Montaigne wrote for an audience that needed no translation from Latin. We are afraid that the case is different with the modern reader; and if translations were needed it were far better to preserve Florio's felicitous and sprightly renderings than to resort to our own skill in the matter.

The ambition of the editors will have been fulfilled if the present volume has the good fortune of increasing the number of Montaigne's readers, and if some of them, after becoming through its pages acquainted with the inimitable essayist determine to

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turn to the larger publications in which they will find in its fulness the whole picture of a man given by him to the world.

ADOLPHE COHN.

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[Either the third or the fourth edition of the *Essays*—probably the third—has been entirely lost. The edition of 1587 is probably the fourth, since that of the following year has "Fifth edition" on its title-page.]

1588. *Les Essais.* Books I., II., and III. "Fifth edition, enlarged by the addition of a third book, and by six hundred additions to the first two books." One volume, quarto; Paris. Pp. 792.

[This edition is the last, and the most important, published during the life of Montaigne.

There is in the municipal library of Bordeaux a copy of this edition, known as the "Bordeaux Copy," which is filled with interlinear and marginal corrections and extensive additions, in the hand of Montaigne. See below, the last title under "Editions".]

1593. *Les Essais.* One volume, 8vo; Lyons. (Follows the text of 1588.)

1595. *Les Essais.* One volume, folio; Paris. (Published by MLLE. DE GOURNAY, with very important additions and corrections made up from Montaigne's papers, and from two or more copies annotated by him.)

[This was the edition followed by FLORIO, for the most part, in his translation; he also used the edition of 1598, especially for Montaigne's *Preface*, which was omitted in the 1595 folio.]

1595. *Les Essais.* One volume, 12mo; Lyons. (A mutilated and exceedingly bad edition, pirated from that of 1588.)

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THE AUTHOR TO THE READER

READER, lo here a well-meaning book. It doth at the first entrance forewarn thee, that in contriving the same, I have proposed unto myself no other than a familiar and private end: I have no respect or consideration at all, either to thy service, or to my glory: my forces are not capable of any such design. I have vowed the same to the particular commodity of my kinsfolks and friends: to the end, that losing me (which they are likely to do ere long) they may therein find some lineaments of my conditions and humours, and by that means reserve more whole, and more lively foster the knowledge and acquaintance they have had of me. Had my intention been to forestall and purchase the world's opinion and favour, I would surely have adorned myself more quaintly, or kept a more grave and solemn march. I desire therein to be delineated in mine own genuine, simple and ordinary fashion, without contention, art or study; for it is myself I portray. My imperfections shall therein be read to the life, and my natural form discerned, so far-forth as public reverence hath permitted me. For if my fortune had been to have lived among those nations, which yet are said to live under the sweet liberty of Nature's first and uncorrupted laws, I assure thee,

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The Author to the Reader

I would most willingly have portrayed myself fully and naked. Thus gentle Reader myself am the groundwork of my book: It is then no reason thou shouldest employ thy time about so frivolous and vain a subject. Therefore farewell. From Montaigne, the first of March, 1580.[1]

[1] *The first of March, 1580.*—Later editions published by Montaigne are dated twentieth of June.

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MONTAIGNE

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THE ESSAYS OF
MICHAEL LORD OF MONTAIGNE

THE FIRST BOOK

CHAPTER I

BY DIVERS MEANS MEN COME UNTO A LIKE END

THE most usual way to appease those minds we have offended (when revenge lies in their hands, and we stand at their mercy) is, by submission to move them to commiseration and pity. Nevertheless, courage, constancy, and resolution (means altogether opposite) have sometimes wrought the same effect.

Edward the Black Prince of Wales (who so long governed our country of Guienne, a man whose conditions and fortune were accompanied with many notable parts of worth and magnanimity) having been grievously offended by the Limousins, though he by main force took and entered their city, could by no means be appeased, nor by the wailful

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outcries of all sorts of people (as of men, women, and children) be moved to any pity, they prostrating themselves to the common slaughter, crying for mercy, and humbly submitting themselves at his feet, until such time as in triumphant manner passing through their city, he perceived three French gentlemen, who alone, with an incredible and undaunted boldness, gainstood the enraged violence, and made head against the fury of his victorious army. The consideration and respect of so notable a virtue did first abate the dint of his wrath, and from those three began to relent, and show mercy to all the other inhabitants of the said town.

Scanderbeg, Prince of Epirus, following one of his soldiers, with purpose to kill him, who by all means of humility, and submissive entreaty, had first assayed to pacify him, in such an unavoidable extremity,[1] resolved at last, resolutely to encounter him with his sword in his hand. This resolution did immediately stay his captain's fury, who seeing him undertake so honourable an attempt, not only forgave,[2] but received him into grace and favour. This example may haply, of such as have not known the prodigious force and matchless valour of the said Prince, admit another interpretation.

The Emperor Conradus, third of that name, having besieged Guelphe,[3] Duke of Bavaria, what vile

[1] Supply "this soldier" after the words "in such an unavoidable extremity."

[2] *Not only forgave*, etc.—F. here goes further than Montaigne, who uses the French expression *le reçut en grace*, which merely means "spared him."

[3] *Guelphe.*—This is the French form; in English, usually *Welf* is used.

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or base satisfaction soever was offered him, would yield to no other milder conditions, but only to suffer such gentlewomen as were with the Duke in the city (their honours safe) to issue out of the Town afoot, with such things as they could carry about them. They with an unrelenting courage advised and resolved themselves (neglecting all other riches or jewels)[1] to carry their husbands, their children, and the Duke himself, on their backs. The Emperor, perceiving the quaintness of their device, took so great pleasure at it, that he wept for joy, and forthwith converted that former inexorable rage and mortal hatred he bare the Duke, into so mild a relenting and gentle kindness, that thenceforward he entreated both him and his with all favour and courtesy.

Either of these ways might easily persuade me: for I am much inclined to mercy, and affected to mildness. So it is, that in mine opinion, I should more naturally stoop unto compassion, than bend to estimation. Yet is pity held a vicious passion among the Stoics. They would have us aid the afflicted, but not to faint and co-suffer with them. These examples seem fittest for me, forsomuch as these minds are seen to be assaulted and environed by these two means, in undauntedly suffering the one, and stooping under the other. It may peradventure be said, that to yield one's heart unto commiseration is an effect of facility, tenderness, and meekness: whence it proceedeth, that the weakest natures, as of women, children, and the vulgar sort, are more subject unto it. But (having contemned

[1] *Neglecting all other riches or jewels.*—Addition to the text.

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tears and wailings) to yield unto the only reverence of the sacred Image of virtue, is the effect of a courageous and employable mind, holding a masculine and constant vigour in honour and affection. Notwithstanding, amazement and admiration may in less generous minds work the like effect. Witness the Thebans, who having accused and indicted their captains, as of a capital crime, forsomuch as they had continued their charge beyond the time prescribed them, absolved and quit Pelopidas of all punishment,[1] because he submissively yielded under the burden of such objections, and to save himself, employed no other means but suing-requests and demissive entreaties; where on the contrary, Epaminondas boldly relating the exploits achieved by him, and with a fierce and arrogant manner upbraiding the people with them, had not the heart so much as to take their lots into his hands,[2] but went his way, and was freely absolved; the assembly much commending the stoutness of his courage.

Dionysius the elder, after long-lingering and extreme difficulties, having taken the city of Reggio, and in it the Captain Phyton (a worthy, honest man), who had so obstinately defended the same, would needs shew a tragical example of revenge. First, he told him how, the day before, he had caused his son and all his kinsfolks to be drowned. To whom Phyton, stoutly out-staring him, answered

[1] *Of all punishment.*—The French text has *à toute peine*, which means "with the greatest difficulty."

[2] *Had not the heart so much as to take their lots into his hands.*—The French text means "had not the heart to take the ballots into their hands."

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nothing, but that they were more happy than himself by the space of one day. Afterward he caused him to be stripped, and by his executioners to be taken and dragged through the city most ignominiously, and cruelly whipping him, charging him besides with outrageous and contumelious speeches. All which notwithstanding, as one no whit dismayed, he ever shewed a constant and resolute heart; and with a cheerful and bold countenance went on still, loudly recounting the honourable and glorious cause of his death, which was, that he would never consent to yield his country into the hands of a cruel tyrant, menacing him with an imminent punishment of the gods. Dionysius plainly reading in his soldiers' looks, that in lieu of animating them with braving his conquered enemy, they in contempt of him, and scorn of his triumph, seemed by the astonishment of so rare a virtue, to be moved with compassion, and inclined to mutiny, yea, and to free Phyton from out the hands of his sergeants or guard, caused his torture to cease, and secretly sent him to be drowned in the sea.

Surely, man is a wonderful, vain, divers, and wavering subject: it is very hard to ground any directly-constant and uniform judgment upon him. Behold Pompey, who freely pardoned all the city of the Mamertines (against which he was grievously enraged), for the love of the magnanimity, and consideration of the exceeding virtue of Zeno, one of their fellow-citizens, who took the public fault wholly upon himself, and desired no other favour, but alone to bear the punishment thereof; whereas Sulla's host, having used the like virtue in the city

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of Perugia, obtained nothing, neither for himself, nor for others.

And directly against my first example, the hardiest amongst men, and so gracious to the vanquished, Alexander the Great, after many strange difficulties, forcing the city of Gaza, encountered by chance with Betis, that commanded therein, of whose valour (during the siege) he had felt wonderful and strange exploits, being then alone, forsaken of all his followers, his arms all broken, all-besmeared with blood and wounds, fighting amongst a number of Macedonians, who pell-mell laid still upon him; provoked by so dear a victory (for among other mishaps he had newly received two hurts in his body) said thus unto him: "Betis, thou shalt not die as thou wouldst: for make account thou must endure all the torments may possibly be devised or inflicted upon a caitiff wretch, as thou art." But he, for all his enemy's threats, without speaking one word, returned only an assured, stern, and disdainful countenance upon him; which silent obstinacy Alexander noting, said thus unto himself: "What? would he not bend his knee? could he not utter one suppliant voice? I will assuredly vanquish his silence, and if I cannot wrest a word from him, I will at least make him to sob or groan." And converting his anger into rage, commanded his heels to be through-pierced, and so all alive with a cord through them, to be torn, mangled, and dismembered at a cart's-tail. May it be, the force of his courage was so natural and peculiar unto him, that because he would no-whit admire him,[1] he respected him the

[1] *That because he would no-whit admire him.*—The meaning is "because he *did* not admire *it*."

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less? or deemed he it so proper unto himself, that in his height, he could not without the spite of envious passion, endure to see it in another? or was the natural violence of his rage incapable of any opposition? surely, had it received any restraint, it may be supposed, that in the ransacking and desolation of the city of Thebes, it should have felt the same; in seeing so many worthies lost, and valiant men put to the sword, as having no means of public defence; for above six thousand were slain and massacred, of which not one was seen either to run away, or beg for grace, but on the contrary, some here and there seeking to affront, and endeavouring to check their victorious enemies, urging and provoking them to force them die an honourable death. Not one was seen to yield, and that to his last gasp did not attempt to revenge himself, and with all weapons of despair, with the death of some enemy, comfort and sweeten his own misery. Yet could not the affliction of their virtue find any ruth or pity, nor might one day suffice to glut or assuage his revengeful wrath. This butcherous slaughter continued unto the last drop of any remaining blood; where none were spared but the unarmed and naked, the aged and impotent, the women and children; that so from amongst them, they might get thirty thousand slaves.

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CHAPTER II

OF SADNESS OR SORROW

NO man is more free from this passion than I, for I neither love nor regard it: albeit the world hath undertaken, as it were upon covenant, to grace it with a particular favour. Therewith they adorn age,[1] virtue, and conscience. Oh foolish and base ornament! The Italians have more properly with its name entitled malignity: for it is a quality ever hurtful, ever sottish; and as ever base and coward, the Stoics inhibit their elders and sages to be therewith tainted, or have any feeling of it.[2]

But the story saith; that Psamneticus,[3] king of Egypt, having been defeated and taken by Cambises, king of Persia, seeing his own daughter pass before him in base and vile array, being sent to draw water from a well, his friends weeping and wailing about him (he with his eyes fixed on the ground, could not be moved to utter one word), and shortly after beholding his son led to execution, held still the same undaunted countenance: but perceiving a familiar friend of his haled amongst the captives, he began to beat his head, and burst forth into extreme sorrow.

[1] *They adorn age.*—The French has *sagesse*, "wisdom."

[2] *Or have any feeling of it.*—Addition to the text.

[3] *Psamneticus.*—Montaigne spells this "Psammenitus."

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This might well be compared to that which one of our Princes was lately seen to do, who being at Trent, and receiving news of his elder brother's death, but such a brother as on him lay all the burthen and honour of his house; and shortly after tidings of his younger brother's decease, who was his second hope; and having with an unmatched countenance and exemplar constancy endured these two affronts; it fortuned not long after, that one of his servants dying, he by this latter accident suffered himself to be so far transported, that quitting and forgetting his former resolution, he so abandoned himself to all manner of sorrow and grief, that some argued, only this last mischance had touched him to the quick: but verily the reason was, that being otherwise full, and over-plunged in sorrow, the least surcharge brake the bounds and bars of patience. The like might (I say) be judged of our story, were it not it followeth, that Cambises, inquiring of Psamneticus, why he was nothing distempered at the misfortune of his son and daughter, he did so impatiently bear the disaster of his friend: "It is," answered he, "because this last displeasure may be manifested by weeping, whereas the two former exceed by much, all means and compass to be expressed by tears."

The invention of that ancient painter might happily fit this purpose, who in the sacrifice of Iphigenia, being to represent the grief of the by-standers, according to the quality and interest each one bore for the death of so fair, so young and innocent a lady, having ransacked the utmost skill and effects of his art, when he came to the Virgin's

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father, as if no countenance were able to represent that degree of sorrow, he drew him with a veil over his face. And that is the reason why our poets feign miserable Niobe, who first having lost seven sons, and immediately as many daughters, as one over-burdened with their losses, to have been transformed into a stone;

Diriguisse malis[1]:
OVID., *Metam.*, vi., 303.
And grew as hard as stone,
By misery and moan.

thereby to express this mournful silent stupidity, which so doth pierce us, when accidents surpassing our strength o'erwhelm us. Verily the violence of a grief, being extreme, must needs astonish the mind, and hinder the liberty of her actions. As it happeneth at the sudden alarm of some bad tidings, when we shall feel ourselves surprised, benumbed, and as it were deprived of all motion, so that the soul bursting afterward forth into tears and complaints, seemeth at more ease and liberty, to loose, to clear and dilate itself

Et via vix tandem voci laxata dolore est,
VIRG., *Æn.*, xi., 151.
And scarce at last for speech
By grief was made a breach.

In the wars which King Ferdinando made against the widow of John, king of Hungary, about Buda,

[1] *Diriguisse malis.*— This quotation, like nearly all the Latin quotations in Montaigne, is given by him without any translation. The translations in the English text are nearly all added by F., and translated by him directly from the Latin.

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a man at arms was particularly noted of all men, forsomuch as in a certain skirmish he had shewed exceeding prowess of his body, and though unknown, being slain, was highly commended and much bemoaned of all: but yet of none so greatly as of a German lord, called Raisciac, as he that was amazed at so rare virtue: his body being covered and had off, this lord, led by a common curiosity, drew near unto it, to see who it might be, and having caused him to be disarmed, perceived him to be his own son; which known did greatly augment the compassion of all the camp: he only without framing word, or closing his eyes, but earnestly viewing the dead body of his son, stood still upright, till the vehemency of his sad sorrow, having suppressed and choked his vital spirits, felled him stark dead to the ground.

Chi puo dir com' egli arde è in picciol fuoco,
PET., *p.* i., *Son.* 140.

He that can say how he doth fry
In petty-gentle flames doth lie,

say those lovers that would lively represent an intolerable passion.

Misero quod omnes
Eripit sensus mihi; Nam simul te
Lesbia aspexi, nihil est super mî
Quod loquar amens.
Lingua sed torpet, tenuis sub artus
Flamma dimanat, sonitu suopte
Tinniunt aures, gemina teguntur
Lumina nocte.
CATUL., *Epig.*, xlviii., 5.

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Miserably from me
This bereaves all sense: for I can no sooner
Eye thee, my sweetheart, but I wot not one word to speak amazed.
Tongue-tied as in trance, while a sprightly thin flame
Flows in all my joints, with a self-resounding
Both my ears tingle, with a night redoubled
Both mine eyes are veiled.

Nor is it in the liveliest, and most ardent heat of the fit, that we are able to display our plaints and persuasions, the soul being then aggravated with heavy thoughts, and the body suppressed and languishing for love. And thence is sometimes engendered that casual faintness, which so unseasonably surpriseth passionate lovers, and that chillness, which by the power of an extreme heat doth seize on them in the very midst of their joy and enjoying. All passions that may be tasted and digested are but mean and slight.

Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.
—SEN., *Hip.*, Act ii., Scene 2.

Light cares can freely speak,
Great cares heart rather break.

The surprise of an unexpected pleasure astonisheth us alike.

Ut me conspexit venientem, et Troja circum
Arma amens vidit, magnis exterrita monstris,
Diriguit visu in medio, calor ossa reliquit,
Labitur, et longo vix tandem tempore fatur.
—VIRG., *Æneid*, iii., 306.

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When she beheld me come, and round about
Senseless saw Trojan arms, she stood afraid
Stone-still at so strange sights: life heat flew out.
She faints: at last, with long pause thus she said.

Besides the Roman lady, that died for joy to see her son return alive from the battle of Cannæ, Sophocles and Dionysius the Tyrant, who deceased through over-gladness, and Talva, who died in Corsica, reading the news of the honours the Roman Senate had conferred upon him: it is reported [1] that in our age, Pope Leo the Tenth, having received advertisement of the taking of the city of Milan, which he had so exceedingly desired, entered into such excess of joy, that he fell into an ague, whereof he shortly died. And for a more authentical testimony of human imbecility, it is noted by our ancients that Diodorus the Logician, being surprised with an extreme passion or apprehension of shame, fell down stark dead, because neither in his school, nor in public, he had been able to resolve an argument propounded unto him. I am little subject to these violent passions. I have naturally a hard apprehension, which by discourse I daily harden more and more.

[1] *It is reported*,—should be "believed."

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CHAPTER III

OF IDLENESS

"AS we see some idle-fallow grounds, if they be fat and fertile, to bring forth store and sundry roots of wild and unprofitable weeds, and that to keep them in ure we must subject and employ them with certain seeds for our use and service; and as we see some women, though single and alone, often to bring forth lumps of shapeless flesh, whereas to produce a perfect and natural generation, they must be manured with another kind of seed: So is it of minds, which except they be busied about some subject, that may bridle and keep them under, they will here and there wildly scatter themselves through the vast field of imaginations."

Sicut aquæ tremulum labris ubi lumen ahenis
Sole repercussum, aut radiantis imagine Lunæ,
Omnia pervolitat latè loca, jdmque sub auras
Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.

VIRG., *Æn.*, viii., 22.

As trembling light reflected from the Sun,
Or radiant Moon on water-filled brass lavers,
Flies over all, in air upraised soon,
Strikes house-top beams, betwixt both strangely wavers.

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And there is no folly, or extravagant raving, they produce not in that agitation.

——veluti ægri somnia, vanæ
Finguntur species.—HOR., *Art. Poet.*, vii.

Like sick men's dreams that feign
Imaginations vain.

The mind that hath no fixed bound, will easily lose itself. For, as we say, "To be everywhere, is to be nowhere."

Quisquis ubique habitat, Maxime, nusquam habitat.
MART., vii., *Epig.*, 72, 6.

Good sir, he that dwells everywhere,
Nowhere can say, that he dwells there.

It is not long since I retired myself unto mine own house, with full purpose, as much as lay in me, not to trouble myself with any business, but solitarily and quietly to wear out the remainder of my well-nigh spent life; where methought I could do my spirit no greater favour than to give him the full scope of idleness, and entertain him as he best pleased, and withal, to settle himself as he best liked: which I hoped he might now, being by time become more settled and ripe accomplish very easily: but I find,

Variam semper dant otia mentem.—LUCAN, iv., 704.

Evermore idleness
Doth wavering minds address.

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that contrariwise playing the skittish and loose-broken jade, he takes a hundred times more career and liberty unto himself, than he did for others; and begets in me so many extravagant chimeras, and fantastical monsters, so orderless, and without any reason, one huddling upon an other, that at leisure to view the foolishness and monstrous strangeness of them, I have begun to keep a register of them, hoping, if I live, one day to make him ashamed, and blush at himself.

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CHAPTER IV

OF LIARS

THERE is no man living, whom it may less beseem to speak of memory, than myself, for to say truth, I have none at all: and am fully persuaded that no man's can be so weak and forgetful as mine. All other parts are in me common and vile, but touching memory, I think to carry the prize from all other that have it weakest, nay and to gain the reputation of it, besides the natural want I endure[1] (for truly considering the necessity of it, Plato hath reason to name it "A great and mighty goddess"). In my country, if a man will imply that one hath no sense, he will say, such a one hath no memory: and when I complain of mine, they reprove me, and will not believe me, as if I accused myself to be mad and senseless. They make no difference between memory and wit; which is an impairing of my market: But they do me

[1] *Besides the natural want I endure.*—One of the greatest liberties taken by F. with Montaigne's text consists in altering the French author's punctuation, and thus very often changing to a certain extent the meaning of the sentence. Thus, here, the word "besides" should be preceded by a period and begin a new sentence, while the parenthetical passage, ending with the word "goddess," should be followed merely by a comma.

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wrong, for contrariwise it is commonly seen by experience, that excellent memories do rather accompany weak judgments. Moreover they wrong me in this (who can do nothing so well as to be a perfect friend) that the same words which accuse my infirmity, represent ingratitude. From my affection they take hold of my memory,[1] and of a natural defect, they infer a want of judgment or conscience. Some will say, he hath forgotten this entreaty or request, or that promise, he is not mindful of his old friends, he never remembered to say, or do, or conceal this or that, for my sake. Verily I may easily forget, but to neglect the charge my friend hath committed to my trust, I never do it. Let them bear with my infirmity, and not conclude it to be a kind of malice; which is so contrary an enemy to my humour.

Yet am I somewhat comforted. First, because it is an evil, from which I have chiefly drawn the reason to correct a worse mischief, that would easily have grown upon me, that is to say, ambition; which defect[2] is intolerable in them that meddle with worldly negotiations. For as divers like examples of nature's progress,[3] say, she hath happily

[1] *From my affection they take hold of my memory.*—The meaning of the French is "They find fault with my affection when the fault is with my memory."

[2] *Which defect.*—*I. e.*, weak memory.

[3] *For as divers like examples, etc.*—Montaigne here enumerates his grounds for comfort in a weak memory. The words quoted above introduced the second reason and are not a reason connected with the previous sentence. The linking together of the two sentences is F.'s work, not Montaigne's. After "nature's progress" omit the comma.

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strengthened other faculties in me, according as it hath grown weaker and weaker in me, and I should easily lay down and wire-draw my mind and judgment, upon other men's traces, without exercising their proper forces, if by the benefit of memory, foreign inventions and strange opinions were present with me. That my speech is thereby shorter: For the magazine of memory is peradventure more stored with matter, than is the storehouse of invention. Had it held out with me, I had ere this wearied all my friends with prattling: the subjects rousing the mean faculty I have to manage and employ them, strengthening and wresting my discourses. It is pity; I have assayed by the trial of some of my private friends: according as their memory hath ministered them a whole and perfect matter, who recoil their narration so far back, and stuff it with so many vain circumstances, that if the story be good, they smother the goodness of it: if bad, you must needs either curse the good fortune of their memory, or blame the misfortune of their judgment. And it is no easy matter, being in the midst of the career of a discourse, to stop cunningly, to make a sudden period, and to cut it off. And there is nothing whereby the clean strength of a horse is more known, than to make a ready and clean stop. Among the skilful I see some, that strive, but cannot stay their race. Whilst they labour to find the point to stop their course, they stagger and falter, as men that faint through weakness. Above all, old men are dangerous, who have only the memory of things past left them, and have lost the remembrance of their repetitions. I

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have heard some very pleasant reports become most irksome and tedious in the mouth of a certain lord, forsomuch as all the by-standers had many times been cloyed with them.

Secondly (as said an ancient writer), that, "I do not so much remember injuries received." I had need have a prompter as Darius had, who, not to forget the wrong he had received of the Athenians, whensoever he sat down at his table caused a page to sing unto him, "Sir, remember the Athenians," and that the places or books which I read over, do ever smile upon me, with some new novelty.

It is not without reason, men say, that "he who hath not a good and ready memory, should never meddle with telling of lies, and fear to become a liar." [1] I am not ignorant how the grammarians make a difference between speaking untrue and lying; and say that to speak untruly, is to speak that which is false, but was reputed true; and that the definition of the Latin word *mentiri*, whence the French word *mentir*, is derived, which in English is to lie, implieth and meaneth to go against one's conscience: and by consequence it concerneth only those who speak contrary to that which they know, of whom I speak. Now, these either invent seal, stamp and all, or else they disguise and change a true ground. When they disguise or change, if they be often put to the repetition of one thing, it is hard for them to keep still in one path, and very strange if they lose not themselves: because the thing, as it is, having first taken up her stand in the memory, and there by the way of knowledge and witting, imprinted itself,

[1] *And fear to become a liar.*—Addition to the text.

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it were hard it should not represent itself to the imagination, displacing and supplanting falsehood, which therein can have no such footing, or settled fastness: and that the circumstances of the first learning, still diving into the mind, should not cause it to disperse the remembrance of all or false bastardising parts gotten together. Where they altogether invent, forsomuch as there is no contrary impression, to front their falsehood, they seem to have so much the lesser fear to mistake or forget themselves, which also notwithstanding being an airy body, and without hold-fast, may easily escape the memory, except it be well assured: whereof I have often (to my no small pleasure) seen the experience, at the cost of those, who profess never to frame their speech, but as best shall fit the affairs they negotiate, and as best shall please the great men they speak unto. For the circumstances to which they will subject their credit and conscience, being subject to many changes, their speech must likewise diversify and change with them, whence it followeth that of one selfsame subject they speak diversely, as now yellow, now grey, to one man thus, and thus to another. And if peradventure these kind of men hoard up their so contrary instructions, what becomes of this goodly art? Who besides, often most foolishly forget themselves, and run at random? For, what memory shall suffice them, to remember so many different forms they have framed to one same subject? I have in my days seen divers that have envied the reputation of this worthy kind of wisdom, who perceive not, that if there be a reputation, there can be no effect.

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"Verily, lying is an ill and detestable vice. Nothing makes us men, and no other means keeps us bound one to another, but our word; knew we but the horror and weight of it, we would with fire and sword pursue and hate the same, and more justly than any other crime."[1] I see all men generally busied (and that very improperly) to punish certain innocent errors in children, which have neither impression nor consequence, and chastise and vex them for rash and fond actions. Only lying, and stubbornness somewhat more,[2] are the faults whose birth and progress I would have severely punished and cut off; for they grow and increase with them: and if the tongue have once gotten this ill habit, good Lord how hard, nay how impossible it is to make her leave it! whereby it ensueth, that we see many very honest men in other matters, to be subject and enthralled to that fault. I have a good lad to my tailor, whom I never heard speak a truth; no not when it might stand him in stead of profit. If a lie had no more faces but one, as truth hath, we should be in far better terms than we are: For, whatsoever a liar should say, we would take it in a contrary sense. But the opposite of truth hath many, many shapes, and an undefinite field. The Pythagoreans make good to be certain and finite, and evil to be infinite and uncertain. A thousand byways miss the mark, one only hits the same. Surely I can never assure myself to come to a good

[1] The quotation marks from *Verily* to *any other crime* are F.'s, not Montaigne's.

[2] *And stubbornness somewhat more*—This is the reverse of Montaigne's meaning. He says: "And stubbornness somewhat below."

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end, to warrant an extreme and evident danger, by a shameless and solemn lie.

An ancient Father saith,[1] "We are better in the company of a known dog, than in a man's society, whose speech is unknown to us." "Ut externus alieno non sit hominis vice" (PLIN., *Nat. Hist.*, vii., 1). "A stranger to a stranger is not like a man." And how much is a false speech less sociable than silence? King Francis the First, vaunted himself to have by this means brought Francis Taverna, Ambassador to Francis Sforza, Duke of Milan, to a nonplus; a man very famous for his rare eloquence, and facility in speech, who had been dispatched to excuse his master, toward his Majesty, of a matter of great importance, which was this. The King to keep ever some intelligence in Italy, whence he had lately been expelled, but especially in the dukedom of Milan,[2] thought it expedient to entertain a gentleman of his about the Duke, in effect as his ambassador, but in appearance as a private man; who should make show to reside there about his particular affairs, forsomuch as the Duke, who depended much more of the Emperor (chiefly then that he was treating a marriage with his niece, daughter of the King of Denmark, who is at this day Dowager of Lorraine) could not without great prejudice unto himself discover to have any correspondency and conference with us. For which commission and purpose a gentleman of Milan, named Merveille, then serving

[1] *An ancient Father saith.*—The quotation marks that follow are F.'s; the whole, in Montaigne, is in indirect discourse.

[2] *But especially in the dukedom of Milan.*—Montaigne says "*even* in the dukedom of Milan."

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the King in place of one of the quiers of his quiery,[1] was deemed fit. This man being dispatched with secret letters of credence, and instructions of an Ambassador, together with other letters of commendation to the Duke in favor of his particular affairs, as a mask and pretence of his proceedings, continued so long about the Duke, that the Emperor began to have some suspicion of him; which as we suppose was cause of what ensued, which was, that under colour of a murder committed, the Duke one night caused the said Merveille to be beheaded, having ended his process in two days. Master Francis being come to the Court, fraught with a long counterfeit deduction of this story (for the King had addressed himself to all the Princes of Christendom, yea and to the Duke himself for justice, for such an outrage committed upon his servant) had one morning audience in the King's council-chamber: who for the foundation of his cause having established and to that end projected many goodly and colourable appearances of the fact: namely, that the Duke his master had never taken Merveille for other than a private gentleman, and his own subject, and who was come thither about his private business, where he had never lived under other name, protesting he had never known him to be one of the King's household, nor never heard of him, much less taken him for his Majesty's agent. But the King urging him with divers objections and demands, and charging him on every side, pressed him so far with the execution done by night, and as it were by stealth, that the silly man, being much entangled and suddenly

[1] In French, *escuyer d'escurie.*

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surprised, as if he would set an innocent face on the matter, answered, that for the love and respect of his Majesty, the Duke his master would have been very loath that such an execution should have been done by day. Here every man may guess whether he were taken short or no, having tripped before so goodly a nose, as was that of our King Francis the first.

Pope Julius the Second, having sent an Ambassador to the King of England to animate him against our foresaid King: the Ambassador having had audience touching his charge, and the King in his answer urging and insisting upon the difficulty he found and foresaw in levying such convenient forces, as should be required to withstand so mighty, and set upon so puissant a King, and alleging certain pertinent reasons, the Ambassador fondly and unfitly replied, that himself had long before maturely considered them, and had told the Pope of them. By which answer so far from his proposition (which was with all speed, and without more circumstances to undertake and undergo a dangerous war) the King of England took hold of the first argument which in effect he afterward found true, which was, that the said Ambassador, in his own particular intent, was more affected to the French side, whereof advertising his master, his goods were all confiscate, himself disgraced, and he very hardly escaped with life.

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CHAPTER V

OF READY OR SLOW SPEECH

Onc ne furent à tous toutes graces données.
All God's good graces are not gone
To all, or of all any one.

SO do we see that in the gift of eloquence, some have such a facility and promptitude, and that which we call utterance, so easy and at command, that at all assays, and upon every occasion, they are ready and provided; and others more slow, never speak anything except much laboured and premeditated.

As ladies and dainty dames[1] are taught rules to take recreations and bodily exercises, according to the advantage of what they have fairest about them, if I were to give the like counsel, in those two different advantages of eloquence whereof preachers and pleading lawyers of our age seem to make profession; the slow speaker in mine opinion should be the better preacher, and the other the better lawyer. Forsomuch as charge of the first allows him as much leisure as he pleaseth to prepare himself; moreover his career continueth still in one kind without inter-

[1] *As ladies and dainty dames.*—Montaigne says simply "aux dames."

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ruption: whereas the lawyer's occasions urging him still upon any accident to be ready to enter the lists: and the unexpected replies and answers of his adverse party, do often divert him from his purpose, where he is enforced to take a new course. Yet is it, that at the last interview which was at Marseilles between Pope Clement the Seventh and Francis the First, our King, it happened clean contrary, where Monsieur Poyet, a man of chief reputation, and all days of his life brought up to plead at the bar, whose charge being to make an oration before the Pope, and having long time before premeditated and conned the same by rote, yea, and as some report, brought it with him ready penned from Paris; the very same day it should have been pronounced, the Pope suspecting he might haply speak something, might offend the other Princes' Ambassadors, that were about him, sent the argument, which he at that time and place thought fittest to be treated of, to the King, but by fortune clean contrary to that which Poyet had so much studied for: so that his oration was altogether frustrate, and he must presently frame another. But he perceiving himself unable for it, the Cardinal Bellay [1] was fain to supply his place and take that charge upon him. The lawyer's charge is much harder than the preacher's: (yet in mine opinion) shall we find more passable lawyers than commendable preachers, at least in France. It seemeth to be more proper to the mind,

[1] Jean du Bellay, 1492–1560, Cardinal, diplomat, and humanist, rendered great services both to King Henry VIII. of England and Francis I. of France. He was second-cousin to the poet Joachim du Bellay, 1525–1560, and was the friend and protector of Rabelais.

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to have her operation ready and sudden, and more incident to the judgment, to have it slow and considerate. But who remaineth mute, if he have no leisure to prepare himself, and he likewise to whom leisure giveth no advantage to say better, are both in one self degree of strangeness.

It is reported that Severus Cassius spoke better extempore, and without premeditation, that he was more beholden to fortune than to his diligence; that to be interrupted in his speech redounded to his profit; and that his adversaries feared to urge him, lest his sudden anger should redouble his eloquence. I know this condition of nature by experience, which cannot abide a vehement and laborious premeditation: except it hold a free, a voluntary, and self-pleasing course, it can never come to a good end. We commonly say of some compositions, that they smell of the oil, and of the lamp, by reason of a certain harshness, and rudeness, which long plodding labour imprints in them that be much elaborated. But besides the care of well-doing, and the contention of the mind, overstretched to her enterprise, doth break and impeach the same; even as it happeneth unto water, which being closely pent in, through its own violence and abundance, can not find issue at an open gullet. In this condition of nature, whereof I now speak, this also is joined unto it, that it desireth not to be pricked forward by these strong passions, as the anger of Cassius (for that motion would be over-rude) it ought not to be violently shaken, but yieldingly solicited: it desireth to be roused and pricked forward by strange occasions, both present and casual. If it go all alone, it

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doth but languish and loiter behind: agitation is her life and grace. I cannot well contain myself in mine own possession and disposition, chance hath more interest in it than myself; occasion, company, yea the change of my voice, draws more from my mind than I can find therein when by myself I [sound] and endeavour to employ the same. My words likewise are better than my writings, if choice may be had in so worthless things. This also happeneth unto me, that where I seek myself, I find not myself: and I find myself more by chance, than by the search of mine own judgment. I shall perhaps have cast forth some subtlety in writing, haply dull and harsh for another, but smooth and curious for myself. Let us leave all these complements and quaintness. That is spoken by every man, according to his own strength. I have so lost it, that I wot not what I would have said, and strangers have sometimes found it before me. Had I always a razor about me, where that happeneth, I should clean raze myself out. Fortune may at some other time make the light thereof appear brighter unto me, than that of midday, and will make me wonder at mine own faltering or sticking in the mire.[1]

[1] *Sticking in the mire.*—Addition to the text.

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CHAPTER VI

OF CONSTANCY

THE law of resolution and constancy implieth not, we should not, as much as lieth in our power shelter ourselves from the mischiefs and inconveniences that threaten us, nor by consequence fear, they should surprise us. Contrariwise, all honest means for a man to warrant himself from evils are not only tolerable, but commendable. And the part of constancy is chiefly acted, in firmly bearing the inconveniences, against which no remedy is to be found. So that, there is no nimbleness of body, nor wielding of hand-weapons, that we will reject, if it may in any sort defend us from the blow, meant at us.

Many most warlike nations in their conflicts and fights, used retreating and flight as a principal advantage, and showed their backs to their enemy much more dangerously than their faces. The Turks at this day retain something of that humour. And Socrates in Plato doth mock at Laches, because he had defined fortitude, to keep herself[1] steady in her rank against her enemies; "What," saith he, "were it then cowardice to beat them in giving them place?" And allegeth Homer against him, who commendeth in Æneas his skill in flying and giving

[1] *To keep herself.*—Mistranslation; it should be "to keep oneself."

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ground. And because Laches, being better advised, avoweth that custom to be amongst the Scythians, and generally amongst all horsemen, he allegeth further unto him the example of the Lacedemonian footmen (a nation above all other used to fight on foot) who in the battle of Platæa, unable to open and to put to rout the Persian phalanx, advised themselves to scatter and put themselves back, that so by the opinion of their flight,[1] they might if they should pursue them, rush in upon them, and put that so combined mass to rout. By which means they gained the victory.

Touching the Scythians, it is reported, that when Darius went to subdue them, he sent their King many reproachful speeches, for so much as he ever saw him retire and give ground before him, and to avoid the main battle. To whom Indathirsez (for so was his name) answered, that, "They did it not for fear of him, nor any other man living, but that it was the fashion of his nation to march thus: as having neither cities, nor houses, nor manured land to defend, or to fear, their enemies should reap any commodity by them. But if he had so great a desire to feed on them, he might draw nearer to view the place of their ancient sepulchres, and there he should meet with whom to speak his bellyful."

Notwithstanding when a man is once within reach of cannon-shot, and as it were point-blank before them, as the fortune of war doth diverse times bring

[1] *That so by the opinion of their flight.*—Here F.'s translation is almost unintelligible, although the text is quite clear. It means "In order that they might break up and dissolve that mass while it pursued them, believing them to be running away, whereby they gained the victory."

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men unto, it ill beseemeth a resolute mind to start aside, or be daunted at the threat of a shot, because by the violence and suddenness thereof we deem it inevitable: and there are some, who, by lifting up of a hand, or stooping their head, have sometimes given their fellows cause of laughter: yet have we seen, that in the voyage the Emperor Charles the Fifth made against us in Provence, the Marquis of Guasto, being gone out to survey the city of Arles, and shown himself out of a windmill, under colour of which he was come somewhat near the town, he was discovered by the Lord of Bonevall, and the seneschal of Agenois, who were walking upon the Theatre Aux Arenes (so called in French because it is full of sand)[1] who shewing him to the Lord of Villiers, commissary of the artillery, he mounted a culverin so level, that had not the Marquis perceived the fire, and so started aside, it was constantly affirmed, he had been shot through the body. Likewise not many years before, Lorence of Medicis, Duke of Urbin, and father to the Queen-mother of France, besieging Mondolphe, a place in Italy, in the province named Vicariate, seeing fire given to a piece that stood upright upon him, stooped his head, and well befell him that he played the duck, for otherwise the bullet, which went right over, and within a little of his head, had doubtless shot him through the paunch. But to say truth, I will never think these motions were made with discourse, for what judgment can you give of an aim, either high or low,

[1] *So called in French because it is full of sand.*—These words, which are F.'s own, constitute an almost ludicrous addition to the text. The name of the theatre *Aux Arènes* is simply due to the fact that it was an old Roman circus.

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in a matter so sudden? It may rather be thought that fortune favoured their fear: and which another time might as well be a mean to make them fall into the cannon's mouth, as to avoid the same. I cannot choose, if the crack of a musket do suddenly strike my ears, in a place where I least look for it, but I must needs start at it: which I have seen happen to men of better sort than myself.

Nor do the Stoics mean, that the Soul of their wisest man in any sort resist the first visions and sudden fantasies, that surprise the same: but rather consent that, as it were unto a natural subjection, he yields and shrinks unto the loud clattering and roar of heaven, or of some violent downfall, for example's sake, unto paleness, and contraction. So likewise in other passions, always provided his opinion remains safe and whole, and the situation of his reason admit no tainting or alteration whatsoever: and he no whit consent to his fright and sufferance. Touching the first part; the same happeneth to him, that is not wise, but far otherwise concerning the second. For the impression of passions doth not remain superficial in him: but rather penetrates even into the secret of reason, infecting and corrupting the same. He judgeth according to them, and conformeth himself to them. Consider precisely the state of the wise Stoic:

Mens immota manet, lachrymæ volvuntur inanes.
VIRG., *Æn.*, iv., 449.

His mind doth firm remain,
Tears are distilled in vain.

The wise Peripatetic doth not exempt himself from perturbations of the mind, but doth moderate them.

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CHAPTER VII

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF COWARDICE

I HAVE heretofore heard a prince, who was a very great captain, hold opinion, that a soldier might not for cowardice of heart be condemned to death: who sitting at his table heard report of the lord of Vervins sentence, who for yielding up of Boulogne, was doomed to lose his head. Verily there is reason a man should make a difference between faults proceeding from our weakness, and those that grow from our malice. For in the latter we are directly bandied against the rules of reason, which nature hath imprinted in us; and in the former it seemeth, we may call the same nature, as a warrant, because it hath left us in such imperfection and defect. So as divers nations[1] have judged, that no man should blame us for anything we do against our conscience. And the opinion of those which condemn heretics and miscreants unto capital punishments,[2] is partly grounded upon this rule: and

[1] *As divers nations.*—The French has *prou de gens*, which means "many people." Moreover, the whole sentence says exactly the reverse of what was written by Montaigne. Montaigne says that many people have judged that no one should blame us *except* for what we do against our conscience.

[2] *Which condemn heretics and miscreants unto capital punishments*, —The text means: "Those who condemn the capital punishment meted out to heretics and miscreants."

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the same which establisheth, that a judge or an advocate may not be called to account for any matter committed in their charge through oversight or ignorance.

But touching cowardice, it is certain, the common fashion is, to punish the same with ignominy and shame. And some hold that this rule was first put in practice by the law-giver Charondas, and that before him the laws of Greece were wont to punish those with death, who for fear did run away from a battle: where he only ordained, that for three days together, clad in women's attire, they should be made to sit in the market-place: hoping yet to have some service at their hands, and by means of this reproach, they might recover their courage again. "Suffundere malis hominis sanguinem quám effundere": "Rather move a man's blood to blush in his face, than remove it by bleeding from his body."

It appeareth also that the Roman laws did in former times punish such as had run away, by death. For Ammianus Marcellinus reporteth, that Julian the Emperor condemned ten of his soldiers, who in a charge against the Parthians, had but turned their backs from it; first to be degraded, and then to suffer death, as he saith, according to the ancient laws, who nevertheless, condemneth others for a like fault, under the ensign of bag and baggage, to be kept amongst the common prisoners. The sharp punishment of the Romans against those soldiers that escaped from Cannæ: and in the same war against those that accompanied Cn. Fulvius in his defeat, reached not unto death, yet may a man fear,

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such open shame may make them despair, and not only prove faint and cold friends, but cruel and sharp enemies.

In the time of our forefathers, the lord of Franget, whilom lieutenant of the Marshal of Chastillion's company, having by the Marshal of Chabanes been placed governor of Fontarabie, instead of the Earl of Lude, and having yielded the same unto the Spaniards, was condemned to be degraded of all nobility, and not only himself, but all his succeeding posterity declared villains and clowns, taxable and incapable to bear arms; which severe sentence was put in execution at Lyons. The like punishment did afterward all the gentlemen suffer that were, within Guise, when the Earl of Nassau entered the town: and others since. Nevertheless, if there were so gross an ignorance, and so apparent cowardice, as that it should exceed all ordinary, it were reason it should be taken for a sufficient proof of inexcusable treachery, and knavery, and for such to be punished.

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CHAPTER VIII

OF FEAR

Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.
VIRG., *Æn.*, ii., 774.

I stood aghast, my hair on end,
My jaw-tied tongue no speech would lend.

I AM no good naturalist (as they say) and I know not well by what springs fear doth work in us: but well I wot it is a strange passion: and as physicians say, there is none doth sooner transport our judgment out of his due seat. Verily I have seen divers become mad and senseless for fear: yea and in him, who is most settled and best resolved, it is certain that whilst his fit continueth, it begetteth many strange dazzlings, and terrible amazements in him. I omit to speak of the vulgar sort, to whom it sometimes representeth strange apparitions, as their fathers' and grandfathers' ghosts, risen out of their graves, and in their winding-sheets: and to others it sometimes sheweth larvas, hobgoblins, Robin-good-fellows, and such other bugbears and chimæras. But even amongst soldiers, with whom it ought to have no credit at all, how often hath she changed a flock of sheep into a troupe of armed men? Bushes and shrubs into men-at-arms and lancers? our friends into our enemies? and a red

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cross into a white? At what time the Duke of Bourbon took Rome, an ancient that kept sentinel,[1] in the borough Saint Peter, was at the first alarm surprised with such terror, that with his colours in his hand, he suddenly threw himself through the hole of a breach out of the city, and fell just in the midst of his enemies, supposing the way to go straight in the heart of the city: but in the end he no sooner perceived the Duke of Bourbon's troops, advancing to withstand him, imagining it to be some sally the citizens made that way, he better bethinking himself, turned head, and the very same way he came out he went into the town again, which was more than three hundred paces distance towards the fields. The like happened, but not so successfully unto Captain Julius his ensign-bearer[2] at what time Saint Paul was taken from us by the Earl of Bures, and the Lord of Reu, who was so frighted with fear, that going about to cast himself over the town walls, with his ancient in his hand,[3] or to creep through a spike-hole, he was cut in pieces by the assailants. At which siege likewise, that horror and fear is very memorable, which so did choke, seize upon, and freeze the heart of a gentleman, that having received no hurt at all, he fell down stark dead upon the ground before the breach. The like passion or rage doth sometimes possess a whole multitude. In

[1] *An ancient that kept sentinel.*—"Ancient" here translates the French *port'enseigne*, "standard-bearer." This is the meaning of the word in Shakespeare's *Othello*.

[2] *Captain Julius his ensign-bearer.*—*I. e.*, Captain Julius's ensign-bearer. A construction very often found in F.'s translation.

[3] *With his ancient in his hand.*—Here "ancient" is evidently intended for the flag or ensign itself.

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one of the encounters that Germanicus had with the Germans, two mighty troops were at one instant so frighted with fear, that both betook themselves to their heels, and ran away two contrary ways, the one right to that place whence the other fled. It sometimes addeth wings unto our heels, as unto the first named, and other times it takes the use of feet from us: as we may read of Theophilus the Emperor, who in a battle he lost against the Agarens, was so amazed and astonished, that he could not resolve to escape away by flight: "adeò pavor etiam auxilia formidat": "Fear is so afraid even of what should help." Until such time as Manuel, one of the chief leaders in his army, having roused and shaken him, as it were out of a dead sleep, said unto him, "Sir, if you will not presently follow me, I will surely kill you, for better were it you should lose your life, than being taken prisoner, lose your Empire and all." Then doth she show the utmost of her power, when for her own service, she casts us off unto valour, which it hath exacted from our duty and honour. In the first set battle the Romans lost against Hannibal, under the Consul Sempronius, a troop of well-nigh ten thousand footmen was so surprised with fear, that seeing no other way to take, nor by what other course to give their baseness free passage, they headlong bent their flight toward the thickest and strongest squadron of their enemies, which with such fury it routed and broke through, as it disranked, and slew a great number of the Carthaginians: purchasing a reproachful and disgraceful flight, at the same rate it might have gained a most glorious victory.

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It is fear I stand most in fear of. For, in sharpness it surmounteth all other accidents. What affection can be more violent and just than that of Pompey's friends, who in his own ship were spectators of that horrible massacre? yet is it, that the fear of the Egyptian sails, which began to approach them, did in such sort daunt and scare them, that some have noted, they only busied themselves to hasten the mariners, to make what speed they could, and by main strength of oars to save themselves, until such time, as being arrived at Tyre, and that they were free from fear, they had leisure to bethink themselves of their late loss, and give their plaints and tears free passage, which this other stronger passion had suspended and hindered.

Tum pavor sapientiam omnem mihi ex anima expectorat.
1. Cic. *Tusc. Qu.*, iv., ex Enn.: *De Orat.*, iii.

Fear then unbreasts all wit
That in my mind did sit.

Those who in any skirmish or sudden bickering of war have been thoroughly scared, sore hurt, wounded, and gored as they be, are many times the next day after brought to charge again. But such as have conceived a true fear of their enemies, it is hard for you to make them look them in the face again. Such as are in continual fear to lose their goods, to be banished, or to be subdued, live in incessant agony and languor; and thereby often lose both their drinking, their eating, and their rest. Whereas the poor, the banished, and silly servants, live often as carelessly and as pleasantly as the

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other. And so many men, who by the impatience and urging of fear, have hanged, drowned, and headlong tumbled down from some rock, have plainly taught us, that fear is more importunate and intolerable than death.

The Grecians acknowledge another kind of it, which is beyond the error of our discourse: proceeding, as they say, without any apparent cause, and from an heavenly impulsion. Whole nations and armies are often seen surprised with it. Such was that, which brought so wonderful a desolation to Carthage, where nothing was heard but lamentable outcries, and frightful exclamations: the inhabitants were seen desperately to run out of their houses, as to a sudden alarm, and furiously to charge, hurt, and enter-kill one another, as if they had been enemies come to usurp and possess their city. All things were there in a disordered confusion, and in a confused fury, until such time as by prayers and sacrifices they had appeased the wrath of their gods. They call it to this day the Panic terror[1] (ERAS., *Chil.*, ii., cent. x., ad. 19; *Chil.*, iii., cet. vii., ad. 3).

[1] *They call it to this day the Panic terror.*—The text means, "These are called panic terrors."

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CHAPTER IX

THAT WE SHOULD NOT JUDGE OF OUR HAPPINESS UNTIL AFTER OUR DEATH

——scilicet ultima semper
Expectanda dies homini est, dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo, supremaque funera debet.
OVID, *Met.*, iii., 135.

We must expect of man the latest day,
Nor ere he die, he 's happy, can we say.

THE very children are acquainted with the story of Crœsus to this purpose: who being taken by Cyrus, and by him condemned to die, upon the point of his execution, cried out aloud: "O Solon, Solon!" which words of his, being reported to Cyrus, who inquiring what he meant by them, told him, he now at his own cost verified the advertisement Solon had before times given him: which was, "that no man, what cheerful and blandishing countenance soever fortune shewed them, may rightly deem himself happy, till such time as he have passed the last day of his life, by reason of the uncertainty and vicissitude of human things, which by a very light motive, and slight occasion, are often changed from one to another clean contrary state and degree." And therefore Agesilaus answered one that counted

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the King of Persia happy, because being very young, he had gotten the garland of so mighty and great a dominion: yea but, said he, Priam at the same age was not unhappy. Of the Kings of Macedon, that succeeded Alexander the great, some were afterward seen to become joiners and scriveners at Rome: and of tyrants of Sicily, schoolmasters at Corinth, One that had conquered half the world, and been Emperor over so many armies, became an humble and miserable suter to the rascally officers of a king of Egypt. At so high a rate did that great Pompey purchase the irksome prolonging of his life but for five or six months. And in our fathers' days, Lodovico Sforza, tenth Duke of Milan, under whom the state of Italy had so long been turmoiled and shaken, was seen to die a wretched prisoner at Loches in France, but not till he had lived and lingered ten years in thraldom, which was the worst of his bargain. The fairest queen, wife to the greatest king[1] of Christendom, was she not lately seen to die by the hands of an executioner? Oh, unworthy and barbarous cruelty! And a thousand such examples. For, it seemeth that as the sea-billows and surging waves rage and storm against the surly pride and stubborn height of our buildings; so are there above, certain spirits that envy the rising prosperities and greatness here below.

Usque adeò res humanas res abdita quædam
Obterit, et pulchros fasces sævasque secures
Proculcare, ac ludibrio sibi habere videtur.

LUCRET., v., 1245.

[1] *The fairest queen, wife to the greatest king.*—Montaigne says "widow"; the allusion is to Mary Queen of Scots.

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A hidden power so men's states hath outworn
Fair swords, fierce sceptres, signs of honours borne,
It seems to trample and deride in scorn.

And it seemeth Fortune doth sometimes narrowly watch the last day of our life, thereby to show her power, and in one moment to overthrow what for many years together she had been erecting, and makes us cry after Laberius, "Nimirum hac die una plus vixi, mihi quam vivendum fuit." Thus it is, "I have lived longer by this one day than I should.

So may that good advice of Solon be taken with reason. But forsomuch as he is a philosopher, with whom the favours or disfavours of fortune, and good or ill luck have no place, and are not regarded by him[1]; and puissances and greatnesses, and accidents of quality, are well-nigh indifferent; I deem it very likely he had a further reach, and meant that the same good fortune of our life, which dependeth of the tranquillity and contentment of a well-borne mind, and of the resolution and assurance of a well ordered soul, should never be ascribed unto man, until he have been seen play the last act of his comedy, and without doubt the hardest. In all the rest there may be some mask: either these sophistical discourses of philosophy are not in us but by countenance, or accidents that never touch us to the quick, give us always leisure to keep our countenance settled. But when that last part of death and of

[1] *With whom the favours or disfavours of fortune, etc.*—The text means "Favours and disfavours of fortune do not rank either as good or evil." The rest of the sentence is also mistranslated, and should read, "Greatness and power are accidents of almost indifferent quality."

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ourselves comes to be acted, then no dissembling will avail, then it is high time to speak plain English,[1] and put off all vizards: then whatsoever the pot containeth must be shown, be it good or bad, foul or clean, wine or water.

> *Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo*
> *Ejiciuntur, et eripitur persona, manet res.*
>
> LUCRET., iii., 57.
>
> For then are sent true speeches from the heart,
> We are ourselves, we leave to play a part.

Lo here, why at this last cast, all our life's other actions must be tried and touched. It is the master-day, the day that judgeth all others: it is the day, saith an ancient writer, that must judge of all my forepassed years. To death do I refer the essay of my study's fruit. There shall we see whether my discourse proceed from my heart, or from my mouth. I have seen divers, by their death, either in good or evil, give reputation to all their forepassed life. Scipio, father-in-law to Pompey, in well dying, repaired the ill opinion which until that hour men had ever held of him. Epaminondas being demanded, which of the three he esteemed most, either Chabrias, or Iphicrates, or himself; "It is necessary," said he, "that we be seen to die, before your question may well be resolved." Verily we should steal much from him, if he should be weighed without the honour and greatness of his end.

God hath willed it as he pleased: but in my time

[1] *To speak plain English.*—Montaigne's text of course has "Il faut parler français."

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three of the most execrable persons, that ever I knew in all abomination of life, and the most infamous, have been seen to die very orderly and quietly, and in every circumstance composed even unto perfection. There are some brave and fortunate deaths. I have seen her cut the twine of some man's life, with a progress of wonderful advancement, and with so worthy an end, even in the flower of his growth, and spring of his youth, that in mine opinion, his ambitious and haughty courageous designs, thought nothing so high, as might interrupt them[1]: who without going to the place where he pretended, arrived there more gloriously and worthily, than either his desire or hope aimed at. And by his fall fore-went the power and name, whither by his course he aspired. When I judge of other men's lives, I ever respect, how they have behaved themselves in their end; and my chiefest study is, I may well demean myself at my last gasp, that is to say, quietly, and constantly.

[1] *Thought nothing so high, as might interrupt them.*—The text means, "thought nothing so high as what actually interrupted them."

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CHAPTER X

THAT TO PHILOSOPHISE, IS TO LEARN HOW TO DIE

CICERO saith, that to "Philosophise is no other thing, than for a man to prepare himself to death": which is the reason, that study and contemplation doth in some sort withdraw our soul from us, and severally employ it from the body, which is a kind of apprenticeage and resemblance of death; or else it is, that all the wisdom and discourse of the world, doth in the end resolve upon this point, to teach us, not to fear to die. Truly either reason mocks us, or it only aimeth at our contentment, and in fine, bends all her travail to make us live well, and as the holy Scripture saith, "at our ease." All the opinions of the world conclude, that pleasure is our end, howbeit they take divers means unto, and for it, else would men reject them at their first coming. For, who would give ear unto him, that for its end would establish our pain and disturbance? The dissensions of philosophical sects in this case, are verbal: "Transcurramus solertissimas nugas": "Let us run over such overfine fooleries, and subtile trifles." There is more wilfulness and wrangling among them, than pertains to a sacred profession. But what person a man undertakes to act, he doth ever therewithal personate his own.

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Although they say, that in virtue itself,[1] the last scope of our aim is voluptuousness. It pleaseth me to importune their ears still with this word, which so much offends their hearing: And if it imply any chief pleasure or exceeding contentments, it is rather due to the assistance of virtue, than to any other supply, voluptuousness being more strong, sinewy, sturdy, and manly, is but more seriously voluptuous. And we should give it[2] the name of pleasure, more favourable, sweeter, and more natural; and not term it vigour, from which it hath his denomination. Should this baser sensuality deserve this fair name, it should be by competency, and not by privilege. I find it less void of incommodities and crosses, than virtue. And besides that, her taste is more fleeting, momentary, and fading, she hath her fasts, her eves, and her travails, and both sweat and blood. Furthermore she hath particularly so many wounding passions, and of so several sorts, and so filthy and loathsome a satiety waiting upon her, that she is equivalent to penitency. We are in the wrong, to think her incommodities serve her as a provocation, and seasoning to her sweetness, as in nature one contrary is vivified by another contrary: and to say, when we come to virtue, that like successes and difficulties overwhelm it, and yield it austere and inaccessible. Whereas much more properly then unto voluptuousness, they ennoble, sharpen, animate, and raise that divine and perfect pleasure, which it mediates and procureth us.

[1] *Although they say that in virtue itself, etc.*—The text means, "Whatever they say, in virtue itself, etc."

[2] *And we should give it. I. e.*, virtue.

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Truly he is very unworthy her acquaintance, that counterbalanceth her cost to his fruit,[1] and knows neither the graces nor use of it. Those who go about to instruct us, how her pursuit is very hard and laborious, and her jovisance well-pleasing and delightful: what else tell they us, but that she is ever unpleasant and irksome? For, what human mean did ever attain unto an absolute enjoying of it? The perfectest have been content but to aspire and approach her, without ever possessing her. But they are deceived; seeing that of all the pleasures we know, the pursuit of them is pleasant. The enterprise is perceived by the quality of the thing, which it hath regard unto: for it is a good portion of the effect, and consubstantial. That happiness and felicity, which shineth in virtue, replenisheth her approaches and appurtenances, even unto the first entrance and utmost bar.

Now of all the benefits of virtue, the contempt of death is the chiefest, a mean that furnisheth our life with an ease-ful tranquillity, and gives us a pure and amiable taste of it: without which every other voluptuousness is extinguished. Lo, here the reasons why all rules encounter and agree with this article. And albeit they all lead us with a common accord to despise grief, poverty, and other accidental crosses, to which man's life is subject, it is not with an equal care: as well because accidents are not of such a necessity, for most men pass their whole life without feeling any want or poverty, and other-some without feeling any grief or sickness, as Xenophilus the musician, who lived an hundred and

[1] *Her cost to his fruit.—I. e.*, what comes to him from it.

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six years in perfect and continual health: as also if the worst happen, death may at all times, and whensoever it shall please us, cut off all other inconveniences and crosses. But as for death, it is inevitable.

> *Omnes eodem cogimur, omnium*
> *Versatur urna, serius, ocius*
> *Sors exitura, et nos in æternum exilium impositura cymbæ.*
> HOR., iii., *Od.* iii., 25.

> All to one place are driv'n, of all
> Shak't is the lot-pot where-hence shall
> Sooner or later drawn lots fall,
> And to death's boat for aye enthrall.

And by consequence, if she make us afeard, it is a continual subject of torment, and which can no way be eased. There is no starting-hole will hide us from her,[1] she will find us wheresoever we are, we may as in a suspected country start and turn here and there: "quæ quasi saxum Tantalo semper impendet" (CIC., *Fin.*, i.): "Which evermore hangs like the stone over the head of Tantalus": Our laws[2] do often condemn and send malefactors to be executed in the same place where the crime was committed: to which whilst they are going, lead them along the fairest houses, or entertain them with the best cheer you can,

[1] *There is no starting-hole will hide us from her.*—Montaigne says: "There is no place whence it does not come to us."

[2] *Our laws.*—Montaigne says, *nos parlements*, that is, "our courts."

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non Siculæ dapes
Dulcem elaborabunt saporem :
Non avium, citharæque cantus
Somnum reducent.—HOR., iii., *Od.* i., 18.

Not all King Deny's dainty fare,
Can pleasing taste for them prepare:
No song of birds, no music's sound
Can lullaby to sleep profound.

Do you think they can take any pleasure in it? or be anything delighted? and that the final intent of their voyage being still before their eyes, hath not altered and altogether distracted their taste from all these commodities and allurements?

Audit iter, numeratque dies, spatioque viarum
Metitur vitam, torquetur peste futura.
CLAUD. *in Ruff.*, ii., 1, 137.

He hears his journey, counts his days, so measures he
His life by his way's length, vexed with the ill shall be.

The end of our career is death, it is the necessary object of our aim: if it affright us, how is it possible we should step one foot further without an ague? The remedy of the vulgar sort is, not to think on it. But from what brutal stupidity may so gross a blindness come upon him? he must be made to bridle his ass by the tail.

Qui capite ipse suo instituit vestigia retro

Who doth a course contrary run
With his head to his course begun.

It is no marvel if he be so often taken tripping; some do no sooner hear the name of death spoken

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of, but they are afraid, yea the most part will cross themselves, as if they heard the Devil named. And because mention is made of it in men's wills and testaments, I warrant you there is none will set his hand to them, till the physician have given his last doom, and utterly forsaken him. And God knows, being then between such pain and fear, with what sound judgment they endure him.[1]

For so much as this syllable sounded so unpleasantly in their ears, and this voice seemed so ill-boding and unlucky, the Romans had learned to allay and dilate the same by a periphrasis. In lieu of saying, he is dead, or he hath ended his days, they would say, he hath lived. So it be life, be it past or no, they are comforted: from whom we have borrowed our phrases, *quondam*, *alias*, or "late such a one." It may haply be, as the common saying is, the time we live is worth the money we pay for it. I was born between eleven of the clock and noon, the last of February, 1533, according to our computation, the year beginning the first of January. It is but a fortnight since I was thirty-nine years old. I want at least as much more. If in the meantime I should trouble my thoughts with a matter so far from me, it were but folly. But what? we see both young and old to leave their life after one selfsame condition. No man departs otherwise from it, than if he but now came to it, seeing there is no man so crazed, bedridden, or decrepit, so long as he remembers Methuselah, but thinks he may yet live twenty years. Moreover, silly creature as thou art, who hath limited the end of thy days? Happily thou

[1] *They endure him.*—Should be, "they endure it."

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presumest upon physicians' reports. Rather consider the effect and experience. By the common course of things, long since thou livest by extraordinary favour. Thou hast already overpast the ordinary terms of common life: And to prove it, remember but thy acquaintance and tell me how many more of them have died before they came to thy age, than have either attained or outgone the same: yea and of those that through renown have ennobled their life, if thou but register them, I will lay a wager, I will find more that have died before they came to five and thirty years, than after. It is consonant with reason and pity, to take example by the humanity of Jesus Christ, who ended his human life at three and thirty years. The greatest man that ever was being no more than a man, I mean Alexander the Great, ended his days, and died also of that age. How many several means and ways hath death to surprise us!

Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis
Gautum est in horas.—HOR., ii., *Od.* xiii., 13.

A man can never take good heed,
Hourly what he may shun and speed.

I omit to speak of agues and pleurisies; who would ever have imagined, that a Duke of Britain should have been stifled to death in a throng of people, as whilom was a neighbour of mine at Lyons, when Pope Clement made his entrance there? Hast thou not seen one of our late kings slain in the midst of his sports? and one of his ancestors die miserably by the chocke of an hog? Æschylus

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fore-threatened by the fall of an house, when he stood most upon his guard, strucken dead by the fall of a tortoise shell, which fell out of the talons of an eagle flying in the air? and another choked with the kernel of a grape? And an emperor die by the scratch of a comb, whilst he was combing his head: And Æmilius Lepidus with hitting his foot against a door-sill? And Aufidius with stumbling against the council-chamber door as he was going in thereat? And Cornelius Gallus the Prætor, Tigillinus, captain of the Roman watch, Lodovico, son of Guido Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, end their days between women's thighs? And of a far worse example Speusippus, the Platonian philosopher, and one of our Popes? Poor Bebius a judge, whilst he demurreth the suit of a plaintiff but for eight days, behold his last expired; and Gaius Julius a physician, whilst he was anointing the eyes of one of his patients, to have his own sight closed for ever by death. And if amongst these examples, I may add one of a brother of mine, called Captain Saint Martin, a man of three and twenty years of age, who had already given good testimony of his worth and forward valour, playing at tennis, received a blow with a ball, that hit him a little above the right ear, without appearance of any contusion, bruise, or hurt, and never sitting or resting upon it, died within six hours after of an apoplexy, which the blow of the ball caused in him.

These so frequent and ordinary examples happening, and being still before our eyes, how is it possible for man to forego or forget the remembrance of death? and why should it not continually seem unto

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us, that she is still ready at hand to take us by the throat? What matter is it, will you say unto me, how and in what manner it is, so long as a man do not trouble and vex himself therewith? I am of this opinion, that howsoever a man may shroud or hide himself from her dart,[1] yea were it under an ox-hide, I am not the man would shrink back: it sufficeth me to live at my ease; and the best recreation I can have, that do I ever take; in other matters, as little vainglorious, and exemplary as you list.

> *——prætulerim dilirus inersque videri,*
> *Dum mea delectent mala me, vel denique fallant,*
> *Quam sapere et ringi.*—Hor., ii., *Epi.*, ii., 126.
>
> A dotard I had rather seem, and dull,
> So me my faults may please make me a gull,
> Than to be wise, and beat my vexed skull.

But it is folly to think that way to come unto it. They come, they go, they trot, they dance: but no speech of death. All that is good sport. But if she be once come, and on a sudden and openly surprise, either them, their wives, their children, or their friends, what torments, what out-cries, what rage, and what despair doth then overwhelm them? saw you ever anything so drooping, so changed, and so distracted? A man must look to it, and in better times fore-see it. And might that brutish carelessness lodge in the mind of a man of understanding (which I find altogether impossible) she sells us her ware at an over-dear rate: were she an enemy by man's wit to be avoided, I would advise men to

[1] *From her dart.*—Montaigne says merely *des coups*, "from blows."

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borrow the weapons of cowardliness: but since it may not be, and that be you either a coward or a runaway, an honest or valiant man, she overtakes you,

Nempe et fugacem persequitur virum,
Nec parcit imbellis juventæ
Poplitibus, timidoque tergo.—*Id.*, iii., *Od.*, ii., 14.

She persecutes the man that flies,
She spares not weak youth to surprise,
But on their hams and back turned plies,

and that no temper of cuirass may shield or defend you,

Ille licet ferro cautus se condat et ære,
Mors tamen inclusum protrahet inde caput.
PROPERT., iii., *El.*, xvii., 25.

Though he with iron and brass his head impale,
Yet death his head enclosed thence will hale,

let us learn to stand, and combat her with a resolute mind. [And to begin to take the greatest advantage she hath upon us from her, let us take a clean contrary way from the common, let us remove her strangeness from her, let us converse, frequent, and acquaint ourselves with her, let us have nothing so much in mind as death, let us at all times and seasons, and in the ugliest manner that may be, yea with all faces shapen and represent the same unto our imagination. At the stumbling of a horse, at the fall of a stone, at the least prick with a pin, let us presently ruminate and say with ourselves, what if it were death itself? and thereupon let us take

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heart of grace, and call our wits together to confront her. Amidst our banquets, feasts, and pleasures, let us ever have this restraint or object before us, that is, the remembrance of our condition, and let not pleasure so much mislead or transport us, that we altogether neglect or forget, how many ways, our joys, or our feastings, be subject unto death, and by how many hold-fasts she threatens us and them. So did the Egyptians, who in the midst of their banquetings, and in the full of their greatest cheer, caused the anatomy of a dead man to be brought before them, as a memorandum and warning to their guests.

Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum,
Grata superveniet, quæ non sperabitur hora.
HOR., i., *Epi.*, iv., 13.

Think every day shines on thee as thy last,
Welcome it will come, whereof hope was past.

It is uncertain where death looks for us; let us expect her everywhere: the premeditation of death is a fore-thinking of liberty. He who hath learned to die hath unlearned to serve. There is no evil in life for him that hath well conceived, how the privation of life is no evil. To know how to die doth free us from all subjection and constraint. Paulus Æmilius answered one, whom that miserable king of Macedon his prisoner sent to entreat him, he would not lead him in triumph, let him make that request unto himself.

Verily, if Nature afford not some help, in all things, it is very hard that art and industry should

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go far before. Of myself, I am not much given to melancholy, but rather to dreaming and sluggishness. There is nothing wherewith I have ever more entertained myself, than with the imaginations of death, yea in the most licentious times of my age.

Jucundum, cum ætas florida ver ageret.
CATUL., *Eleg.*, iv., 16.

When my age flourishing
Did spend its pleasant spring.

Being amongst fair ladies, and in earnest play, some have thought me busied, or musing with myself, how to digest some jealousy, or meditating on the uncertainty of some conceived hope, when God he knows, I was entertaining myself with the remembrance of some one or other, that but few days before was taken with a burning fever, and of his sudden end, coming from such a feast or meeting where I was myself, and with his head full of idle conceits, of love, and merry glee; supposing the same, either sickness or end, to be as near me as him.

Jam fuerit, nec post, unquam revocare licebit.
—LUCR., iii., 947.

Now time would be, no more
You can this time restore.

I did no more trouble myself or frown at such conceit, than at any other. It is impossible we should not apprehend or feel some motions or startings at such imaginations at the first, and coming suddenly upon us: but doubtless he that shall manage and meditate upon them with an impartial eye,

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they will assuredly, in tract of time, become familiar to him. Otherwise for my part, I should be in continual fear and agony; for no man did ever more distrust his life, nor make less account of his continuance. Neither can health, which hitherto I have so long enjoyed, and which so seldom hath been crazed, lengthen my hopes, nor any sickness shorten them of it. At every minute methinks I make an escape. And I incessantly record unto myself, that whatsoever may be done another day, may be effected this day. Truly hazards and dangers do little or nothing approach us at our end. And if we consider how many more there remain, besides this accident, which in number more than millions seem to threaten us, and hang over us, we shall find, that be we sound or sick, lusty or weak, at sea or at land, abroad or at home, fighting or at rest, in the midst of a battle or in our beds, she is ever alike near unto us. "Nemo altero fragilior est, nemo in crastinum sui certior." "No man is weaker than other; none surer of himself to live till to-morrow." Whatsoever I have to do before death, all leisure to end the same, seemeth short unto me, yea were it but of one hour.

Somebody, not long since turning over my writing tables, found by chance a memorial of something I would have done after my death. I told him (as indeed it was true), that being but a mile from my house, and in perfect health and lusty, I had made haste to write it, because I could not assure myself I should ever come home in safety. As one that am ever hatching of mine own thoughts, and place them in myself, I am ever prepared about that which I

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may be: nor can death (come when she please) put me in mind of any new thing. A man should ever, as much as in him lieth, be ready booted to take his journey, and above all things, look he have then nothing to do but with himself.

Quid brevi fortes jaculamur ævo
Multa?—HOR., ii., *Od.*, xvi.

To aim why are we ever bold
At many things in so short hold?

For then we shall have work sufficient, without any more accrease. Some man complaineth more that death doth hinder him from the assured course of an hoped for victory, than of death itself; another cries out, he should give place to her, before he have married his daughter, or directed the course of his children's bringing up; another bewaileth he must forego his wife's company: another moaneth the loss of his children the chiefest commodities of his being. I am now by means of the mercy of God in such a taking, that without regret or grieving at any worldly matter, I am prepared to dislodge, whensoever he shall please to call me. I am everywhere free: my farewell is soon taken of all my friends, except of myself. No man did ever prepare himself to quit the world more simply and fully, or more generally shake off all thoughts of it, than I am fully assured I shall do. The deadest deaths are the best.

—Miser, ô miser (*aiunt*), *omnia ademit.*
Una dies infesta mihi tot præmia vitæ.
LUCR., iii., 942.

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O wretch, O wretch (friends cry), one day,
All joys of life hath ta 'en away:

And the builder,

—*manent* (saith he) *opera interrupta, minæque,*
Murorum ingentes.—VIRG., *Æn.*, iv., 88.

The works unfinished lie,
And walls that threatened high.

A man should design nothing so long aforehand, or at least with such an intent, as to passionate himself to see the end of it; we are all born to be doing.

Cùm moriar, medium solvar et inter opus.
OVID., *Am.*, ii., El., x., 36.

When dying I myself shall spend,
Ere half my business come to end.

I would have a man to be doing, and to prolong his life's offices, as much as lieth in him, and let death seize upon me, whilst I am setting my cabbages, careless of her dart, but more of my imperfect garden. I saw one die, who, being at his last gasp, incessantly complained against his destiny, and that death should so unkindly cut him off in the midst of an history which he had in hand, and was now come to the fifteenth or sixteenth of our kings.

Illud in his rebus non addunt, nec tibi earum,
Jam desiderium rerum super insidet una.
LUCR., iii., 944.

Friends add not that in this case, now no more
Shalt thou desire, or want things wished before.

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A man should rid himself of these vulgar and hurtful humours. Even as church-yards were first placed adjoining unto churches, and in the most frequented places of the city, to inure (as Lycurgus said) the common people, women and children, not be scared at the sight of a dead man, and to the end that continual spectacle of bones, skulls, tombs, graves and burials, should forewarn us of our condition, and fatal end.

Quin etiam exhilarare viris convivia cæde
Mos olim, et miscere epulis spectacula dira,
Certantum ferro, sæpe et super ipsa cadentum
Pocula, respersis non parco sanguine mensis.

SYL. ITAL., xi., 51.

Nay more, the manner was to welcome guests,
And with dire shews of slaughter to mix feasts.
Of them that fought at sharp, and with boards tainted
Of them with much blood, who o'er full cups fainted.

And even as the Egyptians, after their feastings and carousings, caused a great image of death to be brought in and shewn to the guests and bystanders, by one that cried aloud, "Drink and be merry, for such shalt thou be when thou art dead," so have I learned this custom or lesson, to have always death, not only in my imagination, but continually in my mouth. And there is nothing I desire more to be informed of than the death of men: that is to say, what words, what countenance, and what face they shew at their death; and in reading of histories, which I so attentively observe, it appeareth by the shuffling and huddling up of my examples, I

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affect no subject so particularly as this. Were I a composer of books,[1] I would keep a register, commented of the divers deaths, which in teaching men to die, should after teach them to live. Dicearcus made one of that title, but of another and less profitable end. Some man will say to me, the effect exceeds the thought so far, that there is no fence so sure, or cunning so certain, but a man shall either lose or forget, if he come once to that point; let them say what they list: to premeditate on it, giveth no doubt a great advantage: and is it nothing, at the least to go so far without dismay or alteration, or without an ague? There belongs more to it. Nature herself lends her hand, and gives us courage. If it be a short and violent death, we have no leisure to fear it; if otherwise, I perceive that according as I engage myself in sickness, I do naturally fall into some disdain and contempt of life. I find that I have more ado to digest this resolution, that I shall die when I am in health, than I have when I am troubled with a fever: forsomuch as I have no more such fast hold on the commodities of life, whereof I begin to lose the use and pleasure, and view death in the face with a less undaunted look, which makes me hope, that the further I go from that, and the nearer I approach to this, so much more easily do I enter in composition for their exchange. Even as I have tried in many other occurrences, which Cæsar

[1] The sentence which begins with the words, "Were I a composer of books," receives from the change of punctuation a meaning quite different from that of Montaigne. In the original text the sentence ends after the words "of the divers deaths"; the rest is a sentence by itself, and means "he who teaches men to die teaches them to live."

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affirmed, that often some things seem greater, being far from us, than if they be near at hand: I have found that being in perfect health, I have much more been frighted with sickness, than when I have felt it. The jollity wherein I live, the pleasure and the strength make the other seem so disproportionable from that, that by imagination I amplify these commodities by one moiety, and apprehended them much more heavy and burthensome, than I feel them when I have them upon my shoulders. The same I hope will happen to me of death. Consider we by the ordinary mutations, and daily declinations which we suffer, how nature deprives us of the sight of our loss and impairing: what hath an aged man left him of his youth's vigour, and of his forepast life?

Heu senibus vitæ portio quanta manet!
HOR. GAL., i., 16.

Alas to men in years how small,
A part of life is left in all!

Cæsar to a tired and crazed soldier of his guard, who in the open street came to him, to beg leave, he might cause himself to be put to death; viewing his decrepit behaviour, answered pleasantly: "Doest thou think to be alive then?" Were man all at once to fall into it, I do not think we should be able to bear such a change, but being fair and gently led on by her hand, in a slow, and, as it were, unperceived descent, by little and little, and step by step, she rolls us into that miserable state, and day by day seeks to acquaint us with it. So that when youth fails in us, we feel, nay, we perceive no shaking or

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transchange at all in ourselves: which in essence and verity is a harder death, than that of a languishing and irksome life, or that of age. Forsomuch as the leap from an ill being, unto a not being, is not so dangerous or steepy as it is from a delightful and flourishing being unto a painful and sorrowful condition. A weak, bending, and faint stooping body hath less strength to bear and undergo a heavy burden. So hath our soul. She must be roused and raised against the violence and force of this adversary. For as it is impossible, she should take any rest whilst she feareth: whereof if she be assured (which is a thing exceeding human condition) she may boast that it is impossible, unquietness, torment, and fear, much less the least displeasure should lodge in her.

Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solida, neque Auster,
Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ,
Nec fulminantis magna Jovis *manus.*
Hor., iii., *Od.*, iii.

No urging tyrant's threatening face,
Where mind is sound can it displace,
No troublous wind the rough seas master,
Nor Jove's great hand the thunder-caster.

She is made mistress of her passions and concupiscence, lady of indulgence, of shame of poverty, and of all fortune's injuries. Let him that can, attain to this advantage. Herein consists the true and sovereign liberty, that affords us means wherewith

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to jest and make a scorn of force and injustice, and to deride imprisonment, gyves, or fetters.[1]

in manicis, et
Compedibus, sævo te sub custode tenebo.
Ipse Deus simul atque volam, me solvet: opinor,
Hoc sentit moriar, mors ultima linea rerum est.
HOR. i., *Epi.*, xvi., 76.

In gyves and fetters I will hamper thee,
Under a gaoler that shall cruel be:
Yet, when I will, God me deliver shall,
He thinks, I shall die: death is end of all.

Our religion hath had no surer human foundation, than the contempt of life. Discourse of reason doth not only call and summon us unto it. For why should we fear to lose a thing, which being lost, cannot be moaned? but also, since we are threatened by so many kinds of death, there is no more inconvenience to fear them all, than to endure one: what matter is it when it cometh, since it is unavoidable? Socrates answered one that told him, "The thirty Tyrants have condemned thee to death"; "And Nature them," said he. What fondness is it to cark and care so much, at that instant

[1] Compare *Macbeth*, Act V., Scene 4:

. . . Be cured
By the sure physician, death, who *is the key*
To unbar these locks;

and *Julius Cæsar*, Act I., Scene 3:

Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.

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and passage from all exemption of pain and care? As our birth brought us the birth of all things, so shall our death the end of all things. Therefore is it as great folly to weep, we shall not live a hundred years hence, so to wail we lived not a hundred years ago. "Death is the beginning of another life." So wept we, and so much did it cost us to enter into this life; and so did we spoil us of our ancient vail in entering into it. Nothing can be grievous that is but once. Is it reason so long to fear a thing of so short time? Long life or short life is made all one by death. For long or short is not in things that are no more. Aristotle saith, there are certain little beasts along the river Hyspanis, that live but one day; she which dies at eight o'clock in the morning, dies in her youth, and she that dies at five in the afternoon, dies in her decrepitude; who of us doth not laugh, when we shall see this short moment of continuance to be had in consideration of good or ill fortune? The most and the least in ours, if we compare it with eternity, or equal it to the lasting of mountains, rivers, stars, and trees, or any other living creature, is no less ridiculous.

But Nature compels us to it.[1] "Depart" (saith she), "out of this world, even as you came into it. The same way you came from death to life, return without passion or amazement, from life to death[2]:

[1] The speech of Nature, which begins with the words, "Depart out of this world," continues down to "Behold here the good precepts of our universal mother Nature," on p. 74.

[2] Compare *King Lear*, Act V., Scene 2:

> . . . Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither;
> Ripeness is all.

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your death is but a piece of the world's order, and but a parcel of the world's life.

inter se mortales mutua vivunt,
Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt.
LUCR., ii., 74, 77.

Mortal men live by mutual intercourse:
And yield their life-torch, as men in a course.

Shall I not change this goodly contexture of things for you? It is the condition of your creation: death is a part of yourselves: you fly from yourselves. The being you enjoy, is equally shared between life and death. The first day of your birth doth as well address you to die as to live.

Prima quæ vitam dedit, hora, carpsit.
SEN., *Her. Fur.*, chor. iii.

The first hour, that to men
Gave life, straight, cropped it then.

Nascentes morimur, finisque ab origine pendet.
MANIL., *Ast.*, iv.

As we are born we die; the end
Doth of th' original depend.

All the time you live, you steal it from death: it is at her charge. The continual work of your life is to contrive death; you are in death, during the time you continue in life: for you are after death, when you are no longer living. Or if you had rather have it so, you are dead after life: but during life you are still dying: and death doth more rudely touch the dying, than the dead, and more lively and essen-

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tially. If you have profited by life, you have also been fed thereby, depart then satisfied.

Cur non ut plenus vitæ conviva recedis?
LUCR., iii., 982.

Why like a full-fed guest,
Depart you not to rest?

If you have not known how to make use of it: if it were unprofitable to you, what need you care to have lost it? to what end would you enjoy it longer?

—cur amplius addere quæris
Rursum quod pereat male, et ingratum occidat omne?
LUCR, iii., 985.

Why seek you more to gain, what must again
All perish ill, and pass with grief or pain?

Life in itself is neither good nor evil: it is the place of good or evil, according as you prepare it for them. And if you have lived one day, you have seen all: one day is equal to all other days. There is no other light, there is no other night. This sun, this moon, these stars, and this disposition, is the very same, which your forefathers enjoyed, and which shall also entertain your posterity.

Non alium videre patres, aliumve nepotes
Aspicient.

No other saw our sires of old,
No other shall their sons behold.

And if the worst happen, the distribution and variety of all the acts of my comedy, is performed in

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one year. If you have observed the course of my four seasons, they contain the infancy, the youth, the virility, and the old age of the world. He hath played his part[1]; he knows no other wiliness belonging to it, but to begin again, it will ever be the same, and no other.

—Versamus ibidem, atque insumus usque.
LUCR., iii., 123.

We still in one place turn about,
Still there we are, now in, now out.

Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus.
VIRG., *Georg.*, ii., 403.

The year into itself is cast
By those same steps that it hath passed.

I am not purposed to devise you other new sports.

Nam tibi præterea quod machiner, inveniamque
Quod placeat, nihil est, eadem sunt omnia semper.
LUCR., ii., 978.

Else nothing, that I can devise or frame,
Can please thee, for all things are still the same.

Make room for others, as others have done for you. 'Equality is the chief ground-work of equity, who can complain to be comprehended where all are contained?' So may you live long enough, you shall never diminish anything from the time you have to die: it is bootless; so long shall you continue in that state, which you fear, as if you had

[1] *He hath played his part.*—He, *i. e.*, the world.

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died being in your swathing-clothes, and when you were sucking.

—licet, quot vis, vivendo vincere secla,
Mors æterna tamen, nihilominus illa manebit.
Ib., 1126.

Though years you live, as many as you will,
Death is eternal, death remaineth still.

And I will so please you, that you shall have no discontent.

In vera nescis nullum fore morte alium te,
Qui possit vivus tibi te lugere peremptum,
Stansque jacentem. LUCR., iii., 911.

Thou know'st not there shall be not other thou,
When thou art dead indeed, that can tell how
Alive to wail thee dying,
Standing to wail thee lying.

Nor shall you wish for life, which you so much desire.

Nec sibi enim quisquam tum se vitamque requirit,
Nec desiderium nostri nos afficit ullum.
Ib., 963, 966.

For then none for himself himself or life requires:
Nor are we of ourselves affected with desires.

Death is less to be feared than nothing, if there were anything less than nothing.

—multo mortem minus ad nos esse putandum,
Si minus esse potest quam quod nihil esse videmus.
Ib., 970.

Death is much less to us, we ought esteem,
If less may be, than what doth nothing seem.

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Nor alive, nor dead, it doth concern you nothing. Alive, because you are: Dead, because you are no more. Moreover, no man dies before his hour. The time you leave behind was no more yours, than that which was before your birth, and concerneth you no more.

Respice enim quàm nil ad nos anteacta vetustas
Temporis æterni fuerit.—Ib., 1016.

For mark, how all antiquity fore-gone
Of all time ere we were, to us was none.

Wheresoever your life endeth, there is it all. The profit of life consists not in the space, but rather in the use. Some man hath lived long, that hath had a short life. Follow it whilst you have time. It consists not in number of years, but in your will, that you have lived long enough.[1] Did you think you should never come to the place where you were still going?[2] There is no way but hath an end. And if company may solace you, doth not the whole world walk the same path?

—Omnia te vita perfuncta sequentur.—Ib., 1012.

Life past, all things at last,
Shall follow thee as thou hast passed.

[1] Compare *Hamlet*, Act V., Scene 2: If it be now, 't is not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all.

Compare also the passage quoted from *King Lear*, p. 67.

[2] Compare *Measure for Measure*, Act III., Scene 1:

. . . Thou art Death's fool;
For him thou labour'st by thy flight to shun
And yet runn'st toward him still.

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Do not all things move as you do, or keep your course? Is there anything grows not old together with yourself? A thousand men, a thousand beasts, and a thousand other creatures die in the very instant that you die.

Nam nox nulla diem, neque noctem aurora sequuta est,
Quæ non audierit mistos vagitibus ægris
Ploratus mortis comites et funeris atri.—Ib., ii., 587.

No night ensued daylight: no morning followed night,
Which heard not moaning mixed with sick men's groaning.
With deaths and funerals joined was that moaning.

To what end recoil you from it, if you cannot go back? You have seen many who have found good in death, ending thereby [1] many, many miseries. But have you seen any that hath received hurt thereby? Therefore is it mere simplicity to condemn a thing you never proved, neither by yourself nor any other. Why dost thou complain of me and of destiny? Do we offer thee any wrong? is it for thee to direct us, or for us to govern thee? Although thy age be not come to her period, thy life is. A little man is a whole man as well as a great man. Neither men nor their lives are measured by the ell. Chiron refused immortality, being informed of the conditions thereof, even by the God of time and of continuance, Saturn his father. Imagine truly how much an ever-during life would be less tolerable and more painful to a man, than is the life which I have given

[1] *Ending thereby.*—The French has *eschevant*, which means "escaping" or "eschewing."

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him. Had you not death, you would then incessantly curse, and cry out against me, that I had deprived you of it. I have of purpose and wittingly blended some bitterness amongst it, that so seeing the commodity of its use, I might hinder you from over-greedily embracing, or indiscreetly calling for it. To continue in this moderation, that is, neither to fly from life, nor to run to death (which I require of you) I have tempered both the one and other between sweetness and sourness. I first taught Thales the chiefest[1] of your Sages and Wisemen, that to live and die were indifferent, which made him answer one very wisely, who asked him, wherefore he died not; 'Because,' said he, 'it is indifferent.' The water, the earth, the air, the fire, and other members of this my universe, are no more the instruments of thy life than of thy death. Why fearest thou thy last day? It is no more guilty, and conferreth no more to thy death, than any of the others. It is not the last step that causeth weariness: it only declares it. All days march towards death, only the last comes to it." Behold here the good precepts of our universal mother Nature.

I have oftentimes bethought myself whence it proceedeth, that in times of war, the visage of death (whether we see it in us or in others) seemeth without all comparison much less dreaful and terrible unto us, than in our houses, or in our beds, otherwise it should be an army of physicians and whiners, and she ever being one, there must needs be much more assurance amongst country-people

[1] *The chiefest;* should be "the earliest."

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and of base condition, than in others. I verily believe these fearful looks, and astonishing countenances wherewith we encompass it, are those that more amaze and terrify us than death: a new form of life; the out-cries of mothers; the wailing of women and children; the visitation of dismayed and swooning friends: the assistance of a number of pale-looking, distracted, and whining servants; a dark chamber: tapers burning round about; our couch beset round with physicians and preachers; and to conclude, nothing but horror and astonishment on every side of us: are we not already dead and buried? The very children are afraid of their friends, when they see them masked; and so are we. The mask must as well be taken from things, as from men, which being removed, we shall find nothing hid under it, but the very same death, that a seely varlet, or a simple maid-servant, did lately suffer without amazement or fear. Happy is that death, which takes all leisure from the preparations of such an equipage.[1]

[1] *Happy is that death, etc.*—Montaigne means, "Happy is that death which does not leave leisure for the preparation of such an equipage."

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CHAPTER XI

THE PROFIT OF ONE MAN IS THE DAMAGE OF ANOTHER

DEMADES[1] the Athenian condemned a man of the city, whose trade was to sell such necessaries as belonged to burials, under colour, he asked too much profit for them: and that such profit could not come unto him without the death of many people. This judgment seemeth to be ill taken, because no man profiteth but by the loss of others: by which reason a man should condemn all manner of gain. The merchant thrives not but by the licentiousness of youth; the husbandman by dearth of corn; the architect but by the ruin of houses; the lawyer by suits and controversies between men: honour itself, and practice of religious ministers, is drawn from our death and vices. "No physician delighteth in the health of his own friend," saith the ancient Greek Comic: "nor no soldier is pleased with the peace of his city, and so of the rest." And which is worse, let every man sound his own conscience, he shall find, that our inward desires are for the most part nourished and bred in us by the loss and hurt of others; which when I

[1] Celebrated Athenian orator, died about 320 B.C.; remembered especially as having antagonised the policy defended by Demosthenes.

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considered, I began to think, how Nature doth not gainsay herself in this, concerning her general policy: for physicians hold, that "The birth, increase, and augmentation of everything, is the alteration and corruption of another."

Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuò hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.
LUCR., ii., 752.

What ever from it's bounds doth changed pass,
That strait is death of that which erst it was.

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CHAPTER XII

DIVERS EVENTS FROM ONE SELFSAME COUNSEL

JAMES AMYOT,[1] great Almoner of France, did once tell me this story, to the honour of one of our Princes (and so he was indeed by very good tokens, albeit by offspring he were a stranger), that during our first troubles, at the siege of Rouen, the said Prince being advertised by the Queen-mother[2] of a conspiracy and enterprise, that should be attempted against his life, and by letters particularly informed him of the party that should perform it, who was a gentleman of Anjou or Maine, and who to that purpose did ordinarily frequent the said Prince's court; he never imparted that secret or communicated that warning to any man, but the next morrow walking upon Saint Catherine's hill, whence our battery played against the town (for it was, at what time we laid siege to Rouen) with the said Lord great Almoner: and another Bishop by his side, he chanced to descry the said gentleman, whom the Queen-mother had described unto him,

[1] Jacques Amyot, born 1513, died 1593, one of the greatest French writers; known especially through his translation of Plutarch, which served as a basis for North's *Plutarch*. He was at one time tutor to the second son of Henri II., afterwards King Charles IX.

[2] Catherine of Medici, widow of Henri II.

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and caused him to be called, who being come before his presence, said thus unto him, perceiving him already to wax pale, and tremble at the alarms of his conscience: "Master such a one, I am fully persuaded you fore-imagine what I will charge you with, and your countenance doth plainly shew it, you can conceal nothing from me: for I am so well instructed of your business, that would you go about to hide it, you should but mar all, you have perfect knowledge of this and this thing" (which were the chiefest props and devices of the secretest drifts of his complot and conspiracy), "fail not therefore as you tender your life, to confess the truth of all your purpose." When the silly man saw himself so surprised and convicted (for the whole matter had been discovered unto the Queen by one of the accomplices) he had no other way, but to lift up his hands, and beg for grace and mercy at the Prince's hands, at whose feet he would have prostrated himself, but that he would not let him: thus following his discourse: "Come hither, my friend," said he, "Did I ever do you any displeasure? Have I ever through any particular hatred, wronged or offended any friend of yours? It is not yet three weeks since I knew you, what reason might move you to conspire and enterprise my death?" The gentleman with a faint trembling voice, and self-accusing look, answered him, that no particular occasion had ever moved him to that, but the interest of the general cause of his faction, and that some of them had persuaded him, that to root out, and in what manner soever, to make away so great an enemy of their religion, would be an execution full of piety, and a

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work of supererogation. Then said the Prince, "I will shew you how much the religion which I profess is more mild, than that whereof you make profession: yours hath persuaded you to kill me, without hearing me, having never been offended by me: and mine, commands me to pardon you, convicted as you are, that you would so treacherously and without cause have killed me. Go your way, withdraw yourself, let me never see you here again, and if you be wise, henceforward in your enterprises take honester men for your counsellors, than those of your religion." [1]

The Emperor Augustus [2] being in Gaul, received certain advertisement of a conspiracy, that L. Cinna complotted against him, whereof he purposed to be avenged, and for that purpose sent to all his friends against the next morrow for advice and counsel, but passed the foregoing night with great anxiety and unrest, considering that following his intent, he should bring a young gentleman, well born, of a noble house, and great Pompey's nephew, to his death: which perplexity produced divers strange discourses and consideration in him. "What!" said he unto himself, "Shall it ever be reported," [3] that I do live in fear, and suffer mine enemy to walk at his pleasure and liberty? Shall he then go free, that hath attempted and resolved to deprive me of my life, which both by sea and land I have saved

[1] *Than those of your religion.*—The text has *que ceux-là.*

[2] *The Emperor Augustus.*—This passage is the chief source of Corneille's tragedy of *Cinna*; see especially Act IV., Sc. 2 and 3; and Act V., Sc. 1, many lines of which are merely literal renderings of Montaigne's text.

[3] *Shall it ever be reported.*—The text has *sera-il vrai.*

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from so many civil wars, and from so many battles? And now that I have established an universal peace in the world, shall he be absolved and go unpunished, that hath not only determined to murder, but to sacrifice me?" (For, the complot of the conspiracy was to murder him, when he should be at sacrifice.) After that, having taken some rest with himself, he with a louder voice began to exclaim and cry out against himself, saying, "Why livest thou, if the lives of so many depend on thy death?[1] Shall thy vengeance and cruelties never have an end? Is thy life of that worth, as it may countervail the sundry mischiefs that are like to ensue, if it be preserved?" Livia his wife being in bed with him, perceiving his agony, and hearing his speeches, said thus unto him: "And may not women's counsels be admitted? Do as physicians are wont, who when their ordinary receipts will not work, have recourse to the contrary. Hitherto thou couldest never do any good with severity: Lepidus hath followed Savidienus, Murena Lepidus, Scipio Murena, Egnatius Scipio; begin now to prove what good lenity and clemency will do thee. Cinna is convicted, pardon him. To annoy or hurt thee now, he is not able, and thou shalt thereby increase thy glory." Augustus seemed very glad to have found an advocate of his humour, and having thanked his wife, and countermanded his friends, whom he had summoned to the council, commanded Cinna to be brought before him alone. Then sending all men out of his chamber, and a chair prepared for Cinna

[1] *If the lives of so many, etc.*—Montaigne writes, "If so many wish you to die."

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to sit in, he thus bespake him: "First, Cinna, I require to have gentle audience, and that thou wilt not interrupt my speech, which ended, I will give thee time and leisure to answer me. Thou knowest (O Cinna) that when I had taken thee prisoner in mine enemy's camp, who wast not only become, but born my foe; I saved thee, then put thee in quiet possession of thy goods, and at last, have so enriched thee, and placed thee in so high a degree, that even the conquerors are become envious over the conquered. The priest's office, which thou beggedst at my hands, I freely bestowed on thee, having first refused the same to others, whose fathers and friends had in many battles shed their blood for me. After all which benefits, and that I had in duty tied thee so fast unto me, thou hast notwithstanding undertaken to kill me." To whom Cinna replied, crying aloud, "That he had never so much as conceived so wicked a thought, much less entertained the same." "O Cinna, this is not according to thy promise," answered then Augustus, "which was, that thou wouldest not interrupt me. What I say, is true, thou hast undertaken to murder me, in such a place, on such a day, in such a company, and in such manner": and seeing him so amazed in heart, and by his evidence stricken dumb, moved thereunto, not by the condition of his promise, but by the guilt of his self-accusing conscience; "Why wouldest thou do it," replied he, "is it because thou wouldst be Emperor? Truly the commonwealth is but in hard condition, if none but myself hinder thee from the Empire. Thou canst not so much as defend thine own house, and didst but lately lose a process, only

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by the favour of a silly libertine.[1] What! hast thou no mean or power in any other matter, but to attempt Cæsar's life? I quit it, if there be no man but myself to impeach thy hopes. Supposest thou that Paulus, that Fabius, that the Cossenians, or the Servillians will ever permit thee? And so great a troop of noble men, noble, not only in name, but such as by their virtues honour their nobility, will ever suffer it?" After many other such like discourses (for he talked with him more than two hours) he said unto him: "Away, O Cinna, that life which once I gave thee, as to an enemy, I now give thee again, as to a traitor, and a patricide: let a true friendship from this day forward begin between us, let us strive together, which of us two with a better faith shall outgo the other, and whether I have given thy life, or thou hast received the same with great[2] confidence": and so left him. Shortly after he gave him the Consulship, blaming him that he durst not ask it of him. And ever after held him as his dear friend, and made him[3] alone, heir and executor of his goods. Now after this accident, which happened to Augustus in the fortieth year of his age, there was never any conspiracy or enterprise attempted against him; and he received a just reward for his so great clemency. But the like succeeded not to our Prince, for his mildness and lenity could not so warrant him, but that afterward he fell into the snares of the like treason: so vain and frivolous

[1] *Silly libertine.*—F. here fails to grasp the meaning of the French word *libertin* in the text, where it means simply "freedman."

[2] *Great.*—Should be "greater."

[3] *Made him.*—The text means "was made by him."

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a thing is human wisdom: and contrary to all projects, devices, counsels, and precautions, fortune doth ever keep a full sway and possession of all events.

We count those physicians happy and successful, that successfully end a desperate cure, or come to a good issue: as if there were no other art but theirs, that could not subsist of itself, and whose foundations were too feeble to stand and rely upon her own strength: and as if there were none but it, that stands in need of fortune's help-affording hand, for the effecting of her operations. My conceit of it is both the worst and the best a man may imagine: for thanks be to God, there is no commerce between us: I am contrary to others; for I ever despise it, and when I am sick, instead of entering into league or composition with it, I then begin to hate and fear it most: and answer such as urge me to take physic, that at least they will tarry till such time as I have recovered my health and strength again; that then I may the better be enabled to endure the violence and hazard of their potions. I let Nature work, and presuppose unto myself, that she hath provided herself, both of teeth and claws, to defend herself from such assaults as shall beset her, and to maintain this contexture or frame, whose dissolution it so much hateth. In lieu of bringing help unto her, when she most striveth, and is combated by sickness I greatly fear lest I bring succour unto her adversary, and surcharge her with new enemies.

Now I conclude, that not only in physic, but likewise in sundry more certain arts, fortune hath great share in them. The poetical furies, which ravish

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and transport their author beyond himself, why shall we not ascribe them to his good fortune, since himself confesseth, that they exceed his strength and sufficiency, and acknowledgeth to proceed from elsewhere, than from himself, and that they are not in his power, no more than orators say to have those strange motions and extraordinary agitations, that in their art transport them beyond their purpose? The like we see to be in painting, for sometimes the painter's hand shall draw certain lines or draughts, so far exceeding his conception or skill, that himself is forced to enter into admiration and amazement. But fortune yet doth much more evidently shew the share she hath in all their works, by the graces and beauties that often are found in them, not only beyond the intent, but besides the very knowledge of the workman. A heedy reader shall often discover in other men's compositions perfections far differing from the author's meaning, and such as happily he never dreamed of, and illustrateth them with richer senses, and more excellent constructions.

As for military enterprises, no man is so blind but seeth what share fortune hath in them: even in our counsels and deliberations, some chance or good luck must needs be joined to them, for whatsoever our wisdom can effect, is no great matter. The sharper and quicker it is, more weakness finds it in itself, and so much the more doth it distrust itself. I am of Sulla's opinion: and when I nearest consider the most glorious exploits of war, methinks I see, that those who have the conduct of them employ neither counsel nor deliberation about them,

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but for fashion-sake, and leave the best part of the enterprise to fortune, and on the confidence they have in her aid, they still go beyond the limits of all discourse. Casual rejoicings, and strange furies ensue among their deliberations, which for the most induce them to take the counsel least grounded upon appearance or reason, and which quail their courage beyond reason; whence it hath succeeded unto divers great captains, by giving credit to such rash counsels, and alleging to their soldiers, that by some divine inspiration, and other signs and prognostications, they were encouraged to such and such enterprises.

Lo here wherefore in this uncertainty and perplexity, which the impuissances and inability doth bring us to see and choose what is most commodious, for the difficulties which the divers accidents and circumstances of everything draw with them: the surest way, if other considerations did not invite us thereto, is, in my conceit, to follow the party, wherein is most honesty and justice; and since a man doubteth of the nearest way, ever to keep the right. As in these two examples I have lately mentioned, there is no doubt, but that it was more commendable and generous in him, who had received the offence, to remit and pardon the same, than to have done otherwise. If the first had but ill success, his good intent is not to be blamed; and no man knoweth, had he taken the contrary way, whether he should have escaped the end, to which his destiny called him; and then had he lost the glory and commendations of so seldom-seen humanity.

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Sundry men possessed with this fear, are read of in ancient histories; the greatest part of which have followed the way of forerunning the conspiracies, which were complotted against them, by revenge or tortures, but I see very few, that by this remedy have received any good; witness so many Roman emperors. He that perceiveth himself to be in this danger, ought not much to rely upon his power, or hope in his vigilance. For, how hard a matter is it, for a man to warrant and safeguard himself from an enemy, that masks under the visage of the most officious and hearty-seeming friend we have? And to know the inward thoughts and mind-concealed meanings of such as daily attend, and are continually with us? It will little avail him to have foreign nations to his guard, and ever to be encircled about with troops of armed men. Whosoever he be that resolveth to contemn his own life, may at any time become master of other men's lives.

Moreover that continual suspicion, which makes the prince to mistrust everybody, should be a wonderful vexation to his mind. And therefore when Dion[1] was advertised that Calippus[2] watched to kill him, could never find in his heart to inform himself of it: affirming: "He had rather die once, than ever live in fear and misery, and to guard himself not only from his enemies, but from his very friends." Which thing Alexander presented more lively and undauntedly by effect, who by a letter of Parmenio having received advertisement, that Philip his nearest

[1] At one time tyrant of Syracuse; died 354 B.C.
[2] Greek astronomer, died about 330 B.C.

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and best regarded physician, had with money been suborned and corrupted by Darius, to poison him, who at the very instant that he gave Philip the letter to read, swallowed down a potion he had given him: was it not to express his resolution, that if his friends would kill him, he would not shun them, but consent to their treachery? This Prince is the sovereign pattern of hazardous attempts: yet know I not whether in all his life, he shewed an act of more resolute constancy, than this, nor an ornament so many ways famous.

Those which daily preach and buzz in princes' ears, under colour of their safety, a heedy diffidence and ever-wary distrustfulness, do nought but tell them of their ruin, and further their shame and downfall. No noble act is achieved without danger. I know one by his own complexion of a right martial courage, and ready for any resolution, whose good and hopeful fortune is daily corrupted by such verbal persuasions: as first to keep close with his friends; never to listen to any reconciliation with his old enemies: to stand upon his own guard; never to commit himself to any stronger than himself, what fair promise soever they make him, or whatsoever apparent profit they seem to contain. I also know another, who because he did ever follow the contrary counsel, and would never listen to such school-reasons,[1] hath beyond all hope raised his fortune above the common reach.

That boldness wherewith they so greedily gape after glory, is always at hand, whenever need shall be, as gloriously in a doublet as in an armour; in a

[1] *And would never listen, etc.*—Addition to the text.

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cabinet as in a camp; the arm held down, as lifted up.

A wisdom so tenderly precise, and so precisely circumspect, is a mortal enemy to haughty executions. Scipio, to sound the depth of Siphax's intent, and to discover his mind; leaving his army, and abandoning the yet unsettled country of Spain, which under his new conquest of it, was likely to be suspected, he, I say, could pass into Africa only with two simple ships or small barks, to commit himself in a strange and foe country, to engage his person, under the power of a barbarous king, under an unknown faith, without either hostage, or letters of credence, yea without anybody, but only upon the assurance of the greatness of his courage, of his successful good fortune, and of the promise of his high-raised hopes. "Habita fides ipsam plerumque fidem obligat." "Most commonly trusting obligeth trustiness." To an ambitious and fame-aspiring mind, contrariwise, a man must yield little, and carry a hard hand against suspitions: Fear and distrust draw on offences and allure them. The most mistrustful of our kings established his affairs, and settled his estate, especially because he had voluntarily given over, abandoned and committed his life and liberty, to the hands and mercy of his enemies: seeming to put his whole confidence in them, that so they might likewise conceive an undoubted affiance in him. Cæsar did only confront his mutinous legions, and oppose his hardly ruled armies, with the mind-quelling authority of his countenance, and awe-moving fierceness of his words: and did so much trust himself and his fortune, that he

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no whit feared to abandon and commit himself to a seditious and rebellious army.

> —*stetit aggere fulti*
> *Cæspitis, intrepidus vultu, meruitque timeri*
> *Nil metuens.*—LUCAN., v., 296.
>
> He on a rampart stood of turf upreared,
> Fearless, and fearing none was to be feared.

True it is, that this undaunted assurance cannot so fully and lively be represented, but by those in whom the imagination or apprehension of death, and of the worst that may happen, can strike no amazement at all: for, to represent it fearfully, trembling, doubtful and uncertain, for the service of an important reconciliation is to effect no great matter: it is an excellent motive to gain the heart and good will of others, for a man to go and submit himself to them, provided it be done freely, and without constraint of any necessity, and in such sort, that a man bring a pure and unspotted confidence with him, and at least his countenance void of all scruple. Being yet a child, I saw a gentleman, who had the command of a great city, and by a commotion of a seditiously furious people greatly put to his plunges, who to suppress the rising fire of this tumult, resolved to sally out from a strongly assured place, where he was safe, and yield himself to that many-headed monster mutinous rout; thrived so ill by it, that he was miserably slain amongst them: yet deem I not his oversight to have been so great in issuing out, his memory being of most men condemned,[1] as because he took

[1] *His memory being of most men condemned.*—The text means, "as is usually charged to his fame."

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a way of submission, and remissness, and attempted to extinguish that rage and hurly-burly, rather by way of following, than of guiding, and by requiring suit, than by demonstrative resolution: and I deem, a graciously mild severity, with a military commandment, full of confidence and security, beseeming his rank, and the dignity of his charge, had better availed him, had been more successful, at least with more honour, and well seeming comeliness. There is nothing less to be expected or hoped for at the hands of this monstrous faced multitude, thus agitated by fury, than humanity and gentleness; it will much sooner receive reverence, and admit fear. I might also blame him, that having undertaken a resolution (in my judgment, rather brave than rash) to cast himself inconsiderately, weak and unarmed, amidst a tempestuous ocean of senseless and mad men, he should have gone through stitch with it, and not leave the person he represented in the briers, whereas after he had perceived the danger at hand, he chanced to bleed at the nose; and then to change that demiss and flattering countenance he had undertaken, into a dismayed and drooping look, filling both voice and eyes with astonishment and repentance: and seeking to squat himself, he the more inflamed, and called them upon him.

It was determined, there should be a general muster made of divers troops of armed men (a place fittest for secret revenges, and where they may safest be achieved) there were most apparent reasons, that the place was very unsure, or at least, to be suspected, by such as were to have the principal and necessary charge to survey them. Divers counsels

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were proposed, sundry opinions heard, as in a subject of great difficulty, and on which depended so many weighty consequences. My advice was, they should carefully avoid to give any testimony of suspicion, or shew of doubt, and that our troops should be as full as might be, and the files orderly ranked, and every soldier shew an undaunted carriage,[1] and undismayed countenance, and instead of keeping some of our forces back (which thing most opinions aimed at) all captains should be put in mind to admonish their soldiers to make their sallies[2] as orderly and as strong as might be, in honour of the assistance; and spare no powder, which would serve as a gratification toward these suspectful troops, which afterward caused a mutual and profitable confidence.

I find the course that Julius Cæsar held to be the best a man may take: First he essayed by clemency to purchase the love of his very enemies, contenting himself in the conspiracies that were discovered unto him, simply to shew they were not unknown to him, but had perfect notice of them. That done, he took a most noble resolution, which was, without dread or dismay, or any care-taking, to attend whatsoever might betide him, wholly abandoning and remitting himself into the hands of the gods and of fortune. For certainly, it is the state wherein he was, when he was murdered in the Senate.

A stranger having published everywhere that he could teach Dionysius the tyrant of Syracuse a way to understand and discover the very certainty of all

[1] *Every soldier shew an undaunted carriage.*—The text means, "The chiefs shewing, etc."

[2] *Sallies* should be "salvos."

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the practices, his subjects or any else should practise against him, if he would bestow a good sum of money upon him: Dionysius being thereof advertised, sent for him, to discover the secret and understand the truth of so necessary an art for his preservation: the stranger told him, there was no other skill in his art, but that he should deliver him a talent, and then boast he had learned the use of so invaluable a secret of him. Dionysius allowed of his invention, and forthwith caused six hundred crowns to be delivered him. It is not likely that ever he would have given so great a sum of money to an unknown man, but in reward of a most profitable instruction; for by way of this reputation he kept his enemies still in awe. And therefore do princes wisely publish such advertisements as they receive of the plots conspired, and treasons practised against their lives and states, thereby to make men believe, that nothing can be attempted against them, but they shall have knowledge of it. The Duke of Athens committed many fond oversights in the establishing of his late tyranny upon the Florentines, but this the chiefest, that having received the first advertisement of the monopolies and complots the Florentines contrived against him, by Matthew, surnamed Morozo, one of the accomplices, thinking to suppress this warning, and conceal that any in the city were offended at him, or grudged at his rule, caused him immediately to be put to death.

I remember to have heretofore read the story of a Roman (a man of special dignity) who flying the tyranny of the Triumvirate, had many times by the

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subtlety of his invention, escaped those who pursued him. It fortuned upon a day, that a troop of horsemen, who had the charge to apprehend him, passing along a hedge, under which he lay lurking, had well-nigh discovered him; which he perceiving, and considering the dangers and difficulties he had so long endured, thinking to save himself from the continual and daily searches that everywhere were made after him, and calling to mind the small pleasure he might hope of such a life, and how much better it were for him to die once, than live in such continual fear and agony, himself called them, and voluntarily discovered his lurking hole, and that he might rid them and himself from further pursuit and care, did willingly yield unto their cruelty. For a man to call his enemies to aid him, is a counsel somewhat rash, yet think I, it were better to embrace it, than remain still in the continual fit of such a fever that hath no remedy. But since the provisions which man may apply unto it are full of anxiety and uncertainty, much better is it with a full assurance to prepare oneself patiently to endure whatsoever may happen, and draw some comfort from the fact that one is not sure it will happen.

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CHAPTER XIII

OF PEDANTISME

I HAVE in my youth oftentimes been vexed, to see a pedant brought in, in most of Italian comedies, for a vice or sport-maker, and the nickname of "Magister" to be of no better signification amongst us. For, myself being committed to their tuition, how could I choose but be somewhat jealous of their reputation? Indeed I sought to excuse them by reason of the natural disproportion that is between the vulgar sort, and rare and excellent men, both in judgment and knowledge: forsomuch as they take a clean contrary course one from another. But when I considered, the choicest men were they that most contemned them, I was far to seek, and as it were lost myself, witness our good Bellay.[1]

Mais je hay par sur tout un sçavoir pédantesque.

BELLAY.

A pedant knowledge, I
Detest out of all cry.

Yet is this custom very ancient; for Plutarch saith, that "Greek and scholar were, amongst the

[1] *Bellay.*—Joachim du Bellay, 1525–1560, celebrated French poet, the chief poet, after Ronsard, in the Pleiade, author of the *Illustration and Defence of the French Language*, which was considered as the manifesto of the new school of poetry.

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Romans, words of reproach and imputation." And coming afterwards to years of more discretion, I have found they had great reason, and that "magis magnos clericos, non sunt magis magnos sapientes": "The most great clerks are not the most wisest men." But whence it may proceed, that a mind rich in knowledge, and of so many things, becometh thereby never livelier nor more quick-sighted; and a gross-headed and vulgar spirit may without amendment contain the discourse and judgment of the most excellent wits the world ever produced, I still remain doubtful. To receive so many, so strange, yea and so great wits, it must needs follow (said once a lady unto me, yea one of our chiefest princesses, speaking of somebody) "that a man's own wit, force, droop, and as it were diminish itself, to make room for others." I might say, that as plants are choked by over-much moisture, and lamps dammed with too much oil, so are the actions of the mind overwhelmed by over-abundance of matter and study: which occupied and entangled with so great a diversity of things, loseth the mean to spread and clear itself; and that surcharge keepeth it low-drooping and faint. But it is otherwise, for our mind stretcheth the more by how much more it is replenished. And in examples of former times, the contrary is seen, of sufficient men in the managing of public affairs, of great captains, and notable counsellors in matters of estate, to have been therewithal excellently wise.

And concerning philosophers, retired from all public negotiations, they have indeed sometimes been vilified, by the comic liberty of their times, their

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opinions and demeanours yielding them ridiculous. Will you make them judges of the right of a process, or of the actions of a man? They are ready for it.[1] They enquire[2] whether there be any life yet remaining,[3] whether any motion; whether man be anything but an ox, what working and suffering is; what strange beasts law and justice are. Speak they of the magistrate, or speak they unto him; they do it with an unreverent and uncivil liberty. Hear they a prince or a king commended? He is but a shepherd to them, as idle as a swain busied about milking of his cattle, or shearing of his sheep: but yet more rudely. Esteem you any man the greater for possessing two hundred acres of land? They scoff at him, as men accustomed to embrace all the world, as their possession. Do you boast of your nobility, because you can blazon your descent of seven or eight rich grandfathers? They will but little regard you, as men that conceive not the universal image of nature, and how many predecessors every one of us hath had, both rich and poor, kings and grooms, Greeks and barbarians. And were you lineally descended in the fiftieth degree from Hercules, they deem it a vanity to vaunt or allege this gift of fortune. So did the vulgar sort disdain them as ignorant of the first and common things, and as presumptuous and insolent.

But this platonical lustre is far from that which our men stand in need of. They were envied[4] as being beyond the common sort, as despising public

[1] *They are ready for it.*—Ironic.
[2] Supply *still.*
[3] Omit *yet remaining.*
[4] *They were envied.*—"They" means the philosophers.

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actions, as having proposed unto themselves a particular and inimitable life, aiming and directed at certain high discourses, and from the common use: these[1] are disdained as men beyond the ordinary fashion, as incapable of public charges, as leading an unsociable life, and professing base and abject customs, after the vulgar kind. "Odi homines ignavos opera, philosophos sententia" (PACUVIUS, *Lips.*, i., 10): "I hate men that are fools in working, and philosophers in speaking."

As for those philosophers, I say, that as they were great in knowledge, so were they greater in all action. And even as they report of that Syracusan geometrician,[2] who being taken from his bookish contemplation to shew some practice of his skill, for the defence of his country, reared suddenly certain terror-moving engines, and shewed effects far exceeding all men's conceit, himself notwithstanding disdaining all this his handiwork, supposing he had thereby corrupted the dignity of his art; his engines and manual works being but the apprenticeships, and trials of his skill in sport: so they, if at any time they have been put to the trial of any action, they have been seen to fly so high a pitch, and with so lofty a flight, that men might apparently see their minds and spirits were through the intelligence of things, become wonderfully rich and great. But some perceiving the seat of politic government possessed by unworthy and incapable men, have withdrawn themselves from it. And he who demanded of Crates,[3] how long men should philo-

[1] *These.*—The pedants. [2] Archimedes.
[3] Greek philosopher of the fourth century before Christ.

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sophise, received this answer, "Until such time as they who have the conduct of our armies be no longer blockish asses." Heraclitus[1] resigned the royalty unto his brother. And to the Ephesians, who reproved him for spending his time in playing with children before the temple, he answered, "And is it not better to do so, than to govern the public affairs in your company?" Others, having their imagination placed beyond fortune and the world, found the seat of justice, and the thrones of kings, to be but base and vile. And Empedocles[2] refused the royalty, which the Agrigentines offered him. Thales[3] sometimes accusing the cark and care men took about good husbandry, and how to grow rich; some replied unto him, that he did as the fox, because he could not attain unto it himself: which hearing, by way of sport he would needs shew by experience how he could at his pleasure become both thrifty and rich; and bending his wits to gain and profit, erected a traffic, which within one year brought him such riches, as the skilfullest in the trade of thriving could hardly in all their life devise how to get the like. That which Aristotle reporteth of some, who called both him and Anaxagoras, and such like men, wise, and not prudent, because they cared not for things more profitable: besides, I do not very well digest this nice difference of words, that serveth my find-fault people for no excuse:

[1] Greek philosopher, born in sixth century before Christ; died 480 B.C.

[2] One of the most striking characters among early Greek philosophers; born about 450 B.C.

[3] The earliest of Greek philosophers; lived about 640 B.C.

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and to see the base and needy fortune, wherewith they are content, we might rather have just cause to pronounce them neither wise nor prudent.

I quit this first reason, and think it better to say, that this evil proceedeth from the bad course they take to follow sciences; and that respecting the manner we are instructed in them, it is no wonder if neither scholars nor masters, howbeit they prove more learned, become no whit more sufficient. Verily the daily care, and continual charges of our fathers, aimeth at nothing so much, as to store our heads with knowledge and learning; as for judgment and virtue, that is never spoken of. If a man pass by, cry out to our people: "Oh, what a wise man goeth yonder!" and of another: "Oh, what a good man is yonder!" He will not fail to cast his eyes and respect toward the former. A third crier were needful, to say, "Oh, what blockheads are those!" We are ever ready to ask, "Hath he any skill in the Greek and Latin tongue? can he write well? doth he write in prose or verse?" But whether he be grown better or wiser, which should be the chiefest of his drift, that is never spoken of, we should rather enquire who is better wise, than who is more wise.

We labour, and toil, and plod to fill the memory, and leave both understanding and conscience empty. Even as birds flutter and skip from field to field to peck up corn, or any grain, and without tasting the same, carry it in their bills, therewith to feed their little ones; so do our pedants glean and pick learning from books, and never lodge it further than their lips, only to disgorge and cast it to the wind.

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It is strange how fitly sottishness takes hold of mine example. Is not that which I do in the greatest part of this composition, all one and selfsame thing? I am ever here and there picking and culling, from this and that book, the sentences that please me, not to keep them (for I have no storehouse to reserve them in) but to transport them into this: where, to say truth, they are no more mine, than in their first place: we are (in mine opinion) never wise, but by present learning, not by that which is past, and as little by that which is to come. But which is worse, their scholars, and their little ones are never a whit the more fed or better nourished: but passeth from hand to hand, to this end only, thereby to make a glorious shew, therewith to entertain others, and with its help to frame some quaint stories, or pretty tales, as of a light and counterfeit coin, unprofitable for any use or employment, but to reckon and cast accounts.[1] "Apud alios loqui didicerunt, non ipsi secum. Non est loquendum, sed gubernandum" (SEN., *Epist.*, cviii.): "They have learned to speak with others, not with themselves: speaking is not so requisite as government." Nature, to shew that nothing is savage in whatsoever she produceth, causeth oftentimes, even in rudest and most unarted nations, productions of spirits to arise, that confront and wrestle with the most artist productions. As concerning my discourse, is not the Gascony proverb, drawn from a bagpipe, pretty and quaint? "Bouha prou bouha, mas à remuda lous dits quèm"[2]: "You may blow

[1] *Cast accounts.*—"Cast away."

[2] Gascon patois proverb.

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long enough, but if once you stir your fingers, you may go seek." We can talk and prate, Cicero saith thus: These are Plato's customs, these are the very words of Aristotle; but what say we ourselves? what do we? what judge we? A peroquet would say as much.

This fashion puts me in mind of that rich Roman, who to his exceeding great charge had been very industrious to find out the most sufficient men in all sciences, which he continually kept about him, that if at any time occasion should be moved amongst his friends to speak of any matter pertaining to scholarship, they might supply his place, and be ready to assist him: some with discourse, some with a verse of Homer, other some with a sentence, each one according to his skill or profession; who persuaded himself that all such learning was his own, because it was contained in his servants' minds. As they do whose sufficiency is placed in their sumptuous libraries. I know some, whom if I ask what he knoweth, he will require a book to demonstrate the same, and durst not dare to tell me that his posteriors are scabious, except he turn over his lexicon to see what posteriors and scabious is.

We take the opinions and knowledge of others into our protection, and that is all: I tell you they must be enfeoffed in us,[1] and made our own. We may very well be compared unto him, who having need of fire, should go fetch some at his neighbour's chimney, where finding a good fire, should there stay to warm himself, forgetting to carry some home, what avails it us to have our bellies full of

[1] *They must be enfeoffed in us.*—Addition to the text.

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meat, if it be not digested? if it be not transchanged in us? except it nourish, augment, and strengthen us? May we imagine that Lucullus, whom learning made and framed so great a captain without experience, would have taken it after our manner? We rely so much upon other men's arms, that we disannul our own strength. Will I arm myself against the fear of death? it is at Seneca's cost: will I draw comfort either for myself, or any other? I borrow the same of Cicero. I would have taken it in myself, had I been exercised unto it: I love not this relative and begged-for sufficiency. Suppose we may be learned by other men's learning. Sure I am, we can never be wise, but by our own wisdom.

Μισῶ σοφιστὴν, ὅστις οὐχ αὑτῷ σοφός.

Proverb. Iamb.

That wise man I cannot abide,[1]
That for himself cannot provide.

"Ex quo Ennius[2]: Nequidquam sapere sapientem, qui ipsi sibi prodesse non quiret" (ENNIUS): "Whereupon saith Ennius: That wise man is vainly wise, who could not profit himself."

si cupidus, si
Vanus, et Euganeâ quantumvis vilior agnâ.

JUVENAL, *Sat.*, viii., 14.

If covetous, if vain (not wise),
Than any lamb more base, more nice.

[1] *That wise man, etc.*—The Greek line above is translated by Montaigne himself, a practice he usually follows in his Greek but not in his Latin quotations.

[2] Celebrated Roman poet; only fragments of his poems have been preserved; lived about 240–170 B.C.

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"Non enim paranda nobis solum, sed fruenda sapientia est" (CIC., *Finib.*, i., 1.): "For, we must not only purchase wisdom, but enjoy and employ the same."

Dionysius scoffeth at those grammarians, who ploddingly labour to know the miseries of Ulysses, and are ignorant of their own; mocketh those musicians that so attentively tune their instruments, and never accord their manners; derideth those orators, that study to speak of justice, and never put it in execution. Except our mind be the better, unless our judgment be the sounder, I had rather my scholar had employed his time in playing at tennis; I am sure his body would be the nimbler. See but one of these our university men or bookish scholars return from school, after he hath there spent ten or twelve years under a pedant's charge: who is so unapt for any matter? who so unfit for any company? who so to seek if he come into the world? all the advantage you discover in him, is, that his Latin and Gre[illegible] have made him more sottish, more stupid, and more presumptuous, than before he went from home. Whereas he should return with a mind full-fraught, he returns with a wind-puffed conceit: instead of plu[illegible]-feeding the same, he hath only sponged it up with vanity.

These masters, as Plato speaketh of sophisters, (their cousin-germans) of all men, are those that promise to be most profitable unto men, and alone, amongst all, that not only amend not what is committed to their charge, as doth a carpenter or a mason, but impair and destroy the same, and yet they must full dearly be paid. If the law which

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Protagoras[1] proposed to his disciples were followed, which was, that either they should pay him according to his word, or swear in the temple how much they esteemed the profit they had received by his discipline, and accordingly satisfy him for his pains, my pedagogues would be aground, especially if they would stand to the oath of my experience. My vulgar Perigordin speech[2] doth very pleasantly term such self-conceited wizards letter-ferrets, as if they would say letter-strucken men, to whom (as the common saying is) letters have given a blow with a mallet. Verily for the most part they seem to be distracted even from common sense. Note but the plain husbandman, or the unwily shoemaker, and you see them simply and naturally plod on their course, speaking only of what they know, and no further; whereas, these letter-puffed pedants, because they would fain raise themselves aloft, and with their literal doctrine which floateth up and down the superficies of their brain, arm themselves beyond other men, they incessantly intricate and entangle themselves: they utter lofty words, and speak golden sentences, but so that another man doth place, fit, and apply them. They are acquainted with Galen,[3] but know not the disease. They will stuff your head with laws, when God wot they have not yet conceived the ground of the case. They know the theory of all things, but you must seek who shall put it in practice.

[1] Celebrated Greek sophist, lived about 488–419 B.C.

[2] Montaigne was a native of the province of Périgord.

[3] Galenus, the most illustrious physician of antiquity, after Hippocrates; born about 131, died about 201 A.D.

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I have seen a friend of mine, in mine own house, who by way of sport talking with one of these pedantical gulls, counterfeited a kind of fustian tongue, and spake a certain gibberish, without rhyme or reason, sans head or foot, a hotch-pot of divers things, but that he did often interlace it with ink-pot terms, incident to their disputations, to amuse the bookish sot for a whole day long with debating and contending; ever thinking he answered the objections made unto him; yet was he a man of letters and reputation, a graduate, and wore a goodly formal long gown.

Vos ô patritius sanguis quos vivere par est
Occipiti cæco, posticæ occurrite sannæ.

PERS., *Sat.*, i., 61.

You noble bloods, who with a noddle blind
Should live, meet with the mock that 's made behind.

Whosoever shall narrowly look into this kind of people, which far and wide hath spread itself, he shall find (as I have done) that for the most part, they neither understand themselves, nor others, and that their memory is many times sufficiently full fraught, but their judgment ever hollow and empty, except their natural inclination have of itself otherwise fashioned them. As I have seen Adrianus Turnebus,[1] who having never professed anything but study and letters, wherein he was, in mine opinion, the worthiest man that lived these thou-

[1] Adrien Tournebœuf, better known under the Latin translation of his name, whence the French Turnèbe. One of the most celebrated Greek scholars of the French Renaissance; was one of Montaigne's closest friends. He lived 1512–1565 A.D.

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sand years, and who notwithstanding had no pedantical thing about him, but the wearing of his gown, and some external fashions, that could not well be reduced, and incivilised to the courtier's cut; things of no consequence. And I naturally hate our people, that will more hardly endure a long robe uncuriously worn, than a cross skittish mind: and that observe what leg, or reverence he makes, note his garb or demeanour, view his boots, or his hat, and mark what manner of man he is. For his inward parts, I deem him to have been one of the most unspotted and truly honest minds that ever was. I have sundry times of purpose urged him to speak of matters furthest from his study, wherein he was so clear-sighted, and could with so quick an apprehension conceive, and with so sound a judgment distinguish them, that he seemed never to have professed or studied other faculty than war, and matters of state. Such spirits, such natures may be termed worthy, goodly, and solid,

> *—queis arte benigna*
> *Et meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,*
> JUVEN., *Sat.*, xiv., 34.
>
> Whose bowels heaven's bright Sun composed
> Of better mould, art well disposed,

that maintain themselves against any bad institution.[1] Now it sufficeth not that our institution mar us not, it must change us to the better.

There are some of our Parliaments[2] and Courts, who when they are to admit of any officers, do only

[1] *Institution*, *i. e.*, education.

[2] The highest French courts of justice were called Parliaments.

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examine them of their learning; others, that by presenting them the judgment of some law cases, endeavour to sound their understanding. Methinks the latter keep the better style. And albeit these two parts are necessary, and both ought to concur in one, yet truly should that of learning be less prized than judgment: this may well be without the other, and not the other without this. For as the Greek verse saith,

> Ὡς οὐδὲν ἡ μάθησις, ἢν μὴ νοῦς παρῇ.[1]
> *Gnom. Græc.*, χ. et φ. ult.

> Learning nought worth doth lie,
> Be not discretion by.

Whereto serveth learning, if understanding be not joined to it? Oh, would to God, that for the good of our justice, the societies of lawyers were as well stored with judgment, discretion, and conscience, as they are with learning and wit. "Non vitæ, sed scholæ discimus" (SEN., *Epist.*, cvi. f.): "We learn not for our life, but for the school." It is not enough to join learning and knowledge to the mind, it should be incorporated unto it: it must not be sprinkled, but dyed with it; and if it change not and better her estate (which is imperfect) it were much better to leave it. It is a dangerous sword, and which hindereth and offendeth her master, if it be in a weak hand, and which hath not the skill to manage the same: "Ut fuerit melius non didicisse": "So as it were better that we had not learned."

It is peradventure the cause, that neither we, nor

[1] Translated by Montaigne.

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divinity require not much learning in women; and that Francis Duke of Brittany,[1] son to John V., when he was spoken unto for a marriage between him and Isabel, a daughter of Scotland; and some told him she was but meanly brought up, and without any instruction of learning, answered, he loved her the better for it, and that a woman was wise enough, if she could but make a difference between the shirt and doublet of her husband's.

It is also no such wonder (as some say) that our ancestors did never make any great account of letters, and that even at this day (except it be by chance) they are not often found in our kings' or princes' chiefest counsels and consultations. And if the end to grow rich by them, which nowadays is altogether proposed unto us by the study of law, of physic, of pedantisme, and of divinity, did not keep them in credit, without doubt you should see them as beggarly and needy, and as much vilified as ever they were. And what hurt, I pray you, since they neither teach us to think well, nor do well? "Post-quam docti prodierunt, boni desunt" (SEN., *Epist.*, xcv.): "Since men became learned, good men failed." Each other science is prejudicial unto him that hath not the science of goodness.

But may not the reason I whilom sought for also proceed thence? That our study in France, having as it were no other aim but profit, but those less whom nature hath produced to more generous offices, than lucrative, giving themselves unto learning, or so briefly (before they have apprehended

[1] Francis I., Duke of Brittany, born 1414; became Duke in 1442; died 1450.

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any liking of them, retired unto a profession that hath no community with books) there are then none left, altogether to engage themselves to study and books, but the meaner kind of people, and such as are born to base fortune, and who by learning and letters seek some mean to live, and enrich themselves. The minds of which people being both by natural inclination, by example, and familiar institution, of the basest stamp, do falsely reap the fruit of learning. For it is not in her power to give light unto the mind, that hath none, nor to make a blind man to see. The mystery of it is not to afford him sight, but to direct it for him, to address his goings, always provided he have feet of his own, and good, straight, and capable legs. Knowledge is an excellent drug, but no drug is sufficiently strong to preserve itself without alteration or corruption, according to the fault of the vessel that contains it. Some man hath a clear sight, that is not right-sighted; and by consequence seeth what good is, and doth not follow it; and seeth knowledge, but makes no use of it. The chiefest ordinance of Plato in his commonwealth is, to give unto his citizens their charge, according to their nature. Nature can do all, and doth all. The crooked back, or deformed, are unfit for any exercise of the body, and crooked and misshapen minds unproper for exercises of the mind. The bastard and vulgar sort are unworthy of philosophy. When we see a man ill shod, if he chance to be a shoemaker, we say it is no wonder, for commonly none goes worse shod than they. Even so it seems, that experience doth often shew us, a physician less healthy, a divine less re-

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formed, and most commonly a wise man less sufficient than another.

Aristo Chius had heretofore reason to say, that philosophers did much hurt to their auditors, forasmuch as the greatest number of minds are not apt to profit by such instructions, which, if they take not a good, they will follow a bad course: "ἀσώτους ex Aristippi, acerbos ex Zenonis schola exire" (CIC., *Nat. Deor.*, iii.): "They proceed licentious out of the school of Aristippus, but bitter out of the school of Zeno."

In that excellent institution which Xenophon giveth the Persians, we find, that as other nations teach their children letters, so they taught theirs virtue. Plato said the eldest born son, in their royal succession, was thus taught.

"As soon as he was born, he was delivered, not to women, but to such eunuchs, as by reason of their virtue were in chiefest authority about the King. Their special charge was first to shapen his limbs and body, goodly and healthy; and at seven years of age, they instructed and inured him to sit on horseback, and to ride a hunting: when he came to the age of fourteen, they delivered him into the hands of four men, that is to say, the wisest, the justest, the most temperate, and the most valiant of all the nation. The first taught him religion; the second, to be ever upright and true; the third, to become master of his own desires; and the fourth, to fear nothing."

It is a thing worthy great consideration, that in that excellent, and as I may term it, matchless policy of Lycurgus, and in truth, by reason of her

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perfection, monstrous, yet notwithstanding, so careful for the education of children, as of her principal charge, and even in the Muses' bosom and resting-place, there is so little mention made of learning: as if that generous youth, disdaining all other yokes but of virtue, ought only be furnished, in lieu of tutors of learning, with masters of valour, of justice, of wisdom, and of temperance. An example which Plato hath imitated in his laws. The manner of their discipline was to propound questions unto them, teaching[1] the judgment of men and of their actions: and if by way of reason or discourse, they condemned or praised, either this man, or that deed, they must be told the truth and best[2]: by which means at once they sharpened their wits, and learned the right. Astyages in Xenophon calleth Cyrus to an account of his last lesson: It is (saith he) that a great lad in our school, having a little coat, gave it to one of his fellows, that was of lesser stature than himself, and took his coat from him, which was too big for him: our master having made me judge of that difference, I judged that things must be left in the state they were in, and that both seemed to be better fitted as they were; whereupon he shewed me, I had done ill; because I had not[3] only considered the comeliness where I should chiefly have respected justice, which required, that none should be forced in anything which properly belonged to him, and said, he was whipped for it, as we are in

[1] *Teaching.*—Should be "touching."

[2] *They must be told the truth and best.*—The text means, "They had to give their reasons for their answers."

[3] *Not.*—To be omitted.

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our country towns, when we have forgotten the first preterperfect tense or aorist of τύπτω. My regent might long enough make me a prolix and cunning oration "in genere demonstrativo," "in the oratory kind of praise or dispraise," before ever he should persuade me his school is worth that. They have gone about to make the way shorter: and since sciences (even when they are right taken) can teach us nothing but wisdom, honesty, integrity, and resolution, they have at first sight attempted to put their children to the proper of effects, and instruct them, not by hearsay, but by assay of action, lively modelling and framing them, not only by precepts and words, but principally by examples and works, that it might not be a science in their mind, but rather his complexion and habitude; not to purchase, but a natural inheritance.

To this purpose when Agesilaus was demanded, what his opinion was children should learn: answered, "What they should do being men." It is no marvel, if such an institution have produced so admirable effects. Some say, that in other cities of Greece they went to seek for rhetoricians, for painters, and for musicians; whereas in Lacedemon, they sought for law-givers, for magistrates, and generals of armies: In Athens, men learned to say well, but here, to do well: there to resolve a sophistical argument, and to confound the imposture and amphibology of words, captiously interlaced together; here to shake off the allurements of voluptuousness, and with an undaunted courage to contemn the threats of fortune, and reject the menaces of death: those busied and laboured themselves about

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idle words, these after martial things: there the tongue was ever in continual exercise of speaking, here the mind in an incessant practice of well-doing. And therefore was it not strange, if Antipater[1] requiring fifty of their children for hostages, they answered clean contrary to what we would do, "that they would rather deliver him twice so many men"; so much did they value and esteem the loss of their country's education. When Agesilaus inviteth Xenophon to send his children to Sparta, there to be brought up, it is not because they should learn rhetoric, or logic, but, as himself saith, "to the end they may learn the worthiest and best science that may be, to wit, the knowledge how to obey, and the skill how to command."

It is a sport to see Socrates, after his blunt manner, to mock Hippias, who reporteth unto him, what great sums of money he had gained, especially in certain little cities, and small towns of Sicily, by keeping school, and teaching letters, and that at Sparta he could not get a shilling. That they were but idiots and foolish people, who can neither measure nor esteem; nor make no account of grammar, or of rhythms; and who only amuse themselves to know the succession of kings, the establishing and declination of estates, and such like trash of flim-flam tales. Which done, Socrates forcing him particularly to allow the excellency of their form of public government, the happiness and virtue of their private life, remits unto him to guess the conclusion of the unprofitableness of his arts.

[1] One of the generals of Alexander, among whom the government of his Empire was divided; lived 370–317 B.C.

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Examples teach us both in this martial policy, and in all such like, that the study of sciences doth more weaken and effeminate men's minds, than corroborate and adapt them to war. The mightiest, yea, the best settled [1] estate, that is now in the world, is that of the Turks, a nation equally instructed to the esteem of arms and disesteem of letters. I find Rome to have been most valiant when it was least learned. The most warlike nations of our days, are the rudest and most ignorant. The Scythians, the Parthians, and Tamburlane,[2] serve to verify my saying. When the Goths overran and ravaged Greece, that which saved all their libraries from the fire was, that one among them scattered this opinion, that such trash of books and papers must be left untouched and whole for their enemies, as the only mean and proper instrument to divert them from all military exercises, and amuse them to idle, secure, and sedentary occupations. When our King Charles VIII.,[3] in a manner without unsheathing his sword, saw himself absolute lord of the whole kingdom of Naples, and of a great part of Tuscany, the princes and lords of his train ascribed this sudden and unhoped for victory, and facility of so noble and prodigious a conquest, only to this, that most of the princes and nobility of Italy amused themselves rather to become ingenious and wise by learning, than vigorous and warriors by military exercises.

[1] *The mightiest, yea, the best settled.*—The text has simply *le plus fort.*

[2] Tamburlane, *i. e.*, Tamerlane or Timur, the celebrated Tartar conqueror, 1336–1405.

[3] Charles VIII., born 1470, succeeded his father, Louis XI., in 1484; invaded Italy in 1494, and conquered the kingdom of Naples, which he lost in 1495, in spite of his brilliant victory at Fornova. Died 1498.

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CHAPTER XIV

OF THE INSTITUTION AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN; TO THE LADY DIANA OF FOIX, COUNTESS OF GURSON

I NEVER knew father, how crooked and deformed soever his son were, that would either altogether cast him off, or not acknowledge him for his own: and yet (unless he be merely besotted or blinded in his affection) it may not be said, but he plainly perceiveth his defects, and hath a feeling of his imperfections. But so it is, he is his own. So it is in myself. I see better than any man else, that what I have set down is nought but the fond imaginations of him who in his youth hath tasted nothing but the paring, and seen but the superficies of true learning: whereof he hath retained but a general and shapeless form: a smack of everything in general, but nothing to the purpose in particular: after the French manner. To be short, I know there is an art of physic; a course of laws; four parts of the mathematics; and I am not altogether ignorant, what they tend unto. And perhaps I also know the scope and drift of sciences in general to be for the service of our life. But to wade further, or that ever I tired myself with plodding upon Aristotle (the monarch of our modern doctrine) or obstinately continued in

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the search of any one science: I confess I never did it. Nor is there any one art, whereof I am able so much as to draw the first lineaments. And there is no scholar (be he of the lowest form) that may not repute himself wiser than I, who am not able to appose him in his first lesson: and if I be forced to it, I am constrained very impertinently to draw in matter from some general discourse, whereby I examine, and give a guess at his natural judgment: a lesson as much unknown to them, as theirs is to me.

I have not dealt or had commerce with any excellent book, except Plutarch or Seneca, from whom (as the Danaïdes) I draw my water, incessantly filling, and as fast emptying: something whereof I fasten to this paper, but to myself nothing at all. And touching books: history is my chief study, poesy my only delight, to which I am particularly affected: for as Cleanthes said, that as the voice being forcibly pent in the narrow gullet of a trumpet, at last issueth forth more strong and shriller, so meseems that a sentence cunningly and closely couched in measure-keeping poesy darts itself forth more furiously, and wounds me even to the quick. And concerning the natural faculties that are in me (whereof behold here an essay), I perceive them to faint under their own burden; my conceits, and my judgment march but uncertain, and as it were groping, staggering, and stumbling at every rush. And when I have gone as far as I can, I have no whit pleased myself: for the further I sail, the more land I descry, and that so dimmed with fogs, and overcast with clouds, that my sight is so weakened, I cannot distinguish the same. And then undertaking

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to speak indifferently of all that presents itself unto my fantasy, and having nothing but mine own natural means to employ therein, if it be my hap (as commonly it is) among good authors, to light upon those very places which I have undertaken to treat of, as even now I did in Plutarch, reading his discourse of the power of imagination, wherein in regard of those wise men, I acknowledge myself so weak, and so poor, so dull and gross-headed, as I am forced both to pity and disdain myself, yet am I pleased with this, that my opinions have often the grace to jump with theirs, and that I follow them aloof off, and thereby possess, at least, that which all other men have not; which is, that I know the utmost difference between them and myself: all which notwithstanding I suffer my inventions to run abroad, as weak and faint as I have produced them, without bungling and botching the faults, which this comparison hath discovered to me in them.

A man had need have a strong back, to undertake to march foot to foot with these kind of men. The indiscreet writers of our age, amidst their trivial compositions, intermingle and wrest in whole sentences taken from ancient authors, supposing by such filching-theft to purchase honour and reputation to themselves, do clean contrary. For, this infinite variety and dissemblance of lustres, makes a face so wan, so ill-favoured, and so ugly, in respect of theirs, that they lose much more than gain thereby.

These were two contrary humours: The philosopher Chrysippus[1] was wont to foist-in amongst his

[1] Philosopher, belongs to the stoic school; lived from 280 to 207 or 199 B.C.

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books, not only whole sentences, and other long-long discourses, but whole books of other authors, as in one, he brought in Euripides his Medea. And Apollodorus[1] was wont to say of him, that if one should draw from out his books what he had stolen from others, his paper would remain blank. Whereas Epicurus clean contrary to him in three hundred volumes he left behind him, had not made use of one allegation.

It was my fortune not long since to light upon such a place: I had languishingly traced after some French words, so naked and shallow, and so void either of sense or matter, that at last I found them to be nought but mere French words; and after a tedious and wearisome travel, I chanced to stumble upon an high, rich, and even to the clouds-raised piece, the descent whereof had it been somewhat more pleasant or easy, or the ascent reaching a little further, it had been excusable, and to be borne withal; but it was such a steep downfall, and by mere strength hewn out of the main rock, that by reading of the first six words, methought I was carried into another world: whereby I perceive the bottom whence I came to be so low and deep, as I durst never more adventure to go through it; for, if I did stuff any one of my discourses with those rich spoils, it would manifestly cause the sottishness of others to appear. To reprove mine own faults in others, seems to me no more insufferable, than to reprehend (as I do often) those of others in myself. They ought to be accused everywhere, and have all places

[1] Apollodorus, the grammarian, who lived in the second century B.C.

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of sanctuary taken from them: yet do I know how over-boldly at all times I adventure to equal myself unto my filchings, and to march hand in hand with them; not without a fond-hardy hope, that I may perhaps be able to blear the eyes of the judges from discerning them. But it is as much for the benefit of my application, as for the good of mine invention and force. And I do not furiously front, and body to body wrestle with those old champions: it is but by sleights, advantages, and false offers I seek to come within them, and if I can, to give them a fall. I do not rashly take them about the neck, I do but touch them, nor do I go so far as by my bargain I would seem to do; could I but keep even with them, I should then be an honest man; for I seek not to venture on them, but where they are strongest. To do as I have seen some, that is, to shroud themselves under others' arms, not daring so much as to show their fingers' ends unarmed, and to botch up all their works (as it is an easy matter in a common subject, namely for the wiser sort) with ancient inventions, here and there huddled-up together. And in those who endeavoured to hide what they have filched from others, and make it their own, it is first a manifest note of injustice, than a plain argument of cowardliness; who, having nothing of any worth in themselves to make show of, will yet under the countenance of others' sufficiency go about to make a fair offer. Moreover (oh, great foolishness) to seek by such cozening tricks to forestall the ignorant approbation of the com on sort, nothing fearing to discover their ignorance to men of understanding (whose praise only is of value) who will soon trace

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out such borrowed ware. As for me, there is nothing I will do less. I never spake of others, but that I may the more speak of myself. This concerneth not those mingle-mangles of many kinds of stuff, or, as the Grecians call them, Rhapsodies,[1] that for such are published, of which kind I have (since I came to years of discretion) seen divers most ingenious and witty; amongst others, one under the name of *Capilupus*[2]; besides many of the ancient stamp. These are wits of such excellence, as both here and elsewhere they will soon be perceived, as our late famous writer Lipsius, in his learned and laborious work of the Politics.

Yet whatsoever come of it, for so much as they are but follies, my intent is not to smother them, no more than a bald and hoary picture of mine, where a painter hath drawn not a perfect visage, but mine own. For, howsoever, these are but my humours and opinions, and I deliver them but to show what my conceit is, and not what ought to be believed. Wherein I aim at nothing but to display myself, who peradventure (if a new prenticeship change me) shall be another to-morrow. I have no authority to purchase belief, neither do I desire it; knowing well that I am not sufficiently taught to instruct others.

Some having read my precedent chapter, told me not long since in mine own house, I should some-

[1] *This concerneth not . . . Rhapsodies.*—Montaigne says, *ceci ne touche pas les centons.* A centon is a poem consisting of lines or parts of lines taken from some other author or authors.

[2] Several Italian poets belonging to the Capilupi family wrote "centoni." In 1590 appeared in Rome *Capiluporum carmina et centones.*

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what more have extended myself in the discourse concerning the institution of children. Now (Madam) if there were any sufficiency in me, touching that subject, I could not better employ the same, than to bestow it as a present upon that little lad, which ere long threateneth to make a happy issue from out your honourable womb: for (Madame) you are too generous to begin with other than a man child. And having had so great a part in the conduct of your successful marriage, I may challenge some right and interest in the greatness and prosperity of all that shall proceed from it: moreover, the ancient and rightful possession, which you from time to time have ever had, and still have over my service, urgeth me with more than ordinary respects, to wish all honour, welfare, and advantage to whatsoever may in any sort concern you and yours. And truly, my meaning is, but to shew,[1] that the greatest difficulty, and importing all human knowledge, seemeth to be in this point, where the nurture and institution of young children is in question. For, as in matters of husbandry, the labour that must be used before sowing, setting, and planting, yea, in planting itself, is most certain and easy; but when that which was sown, set and planted, cometh to take life; before it come to ripeness, much ado; and great variety of proceeding belongeth to it; so in men, it is no great matter to get them, but being born, what continual cares, what diligent attendance, what doubts and fears, do daily wait on their parents and tutors, before they can be nurtured and brought

[1] *And truly my meaning is but to shew.*—The text means, "All I understand therein is."

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to any good? The fore-shew of their inclination whilst they are young is so uncertain, their humours so variable, their promises so changing, their hopes so false, and their proceedings so doubtful, that it is very hard (yea for the wisest [1]) to ground any certain judgment, or assured success upon them. Behold Cymon, view Themistocles, and a thousand others, how they have differed, and fallen to better from themselves, and deceive the expectation of such as knew them. The young whelps both of dogs and bears, at first sight shew their natural disposition, but men headlong embracing this custom or fashion, following that humour or opinion, admitting this or that passion, allowing of that or this law, are easily changed, and soon disguised; yet is it hard to force the natural propension or readiness of the mind, whereby it followeth, that for want of heedy foresight in those that could not guide their course well, they often employ much time in vain, to address young children in those matters, whereunto they are not naturally addicted. All which difficulties notwithstanding, mine opinion is, to bring them up in the best and profitablest studies, and that a man should slightly pass over those fond presages, and deceiving prognostics, which we over precisely gather in their infancy. And (without offence be it said [2]) methinks, that Plato in his commonwealth alloweth them too-too much authority.

Madame, learning joined with true knowledge [3] is

[1] *Yea for the wisest.*—Addition to the text.

[2] *Without offence be it said.*—Addition to the text.

[3] *Learning joined with true knowledge.*—The text has merely *la science.*

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an especial and graceful ornament, and an implement of wonderful use and consequence, namely in persons raised to that degree of fortune, wherein you are. And in good truth, learning hath not her own true form, nor can she make shew of her beauteous lineaments, if she fall into the hands of base and vile persons. [For,[1] as famous Torquato Tasso saith:

"Philosophy being a rich and noble queen, and knowing her own worth, graciously smileth upon, and lovingly embraceth princes and noblemen, if they become suitors to her, admitting them as her minions, and gently affording them all the favours she can; whereas upon the contrary, if she be wooed, and sued upon by clowns, mechanical fellows, and such base kind of people, she holds herself disparaged and disgraced, as holding no proportion with them. And therefore see we by experience, that if a true gentleman, or nobleman follow her with any attention, and wooed her with importunity, he shall learn and know more of her, and prove a better scholar in one year, than an ungentle or base fellow shall in seven, though he pursue her never so attentively."]

She is much more ready and fierce[2] to lend her furtherance and direction in the conduct of a war, to attempt honourable actions, to command a people, to treat a peace with a prince of[3] foreign nation, than she is to form an argument in logic, to devise a syllogism, to canvas a case at the bar, or to prescribe a receipt of pills. So (noble lady) forsomuch

[1] All this long bracketed passage is F.'s, and not Montaigne's.
[2] *Ready and fierce.*—The text has *fier* ("proud").
[3] *Of.*—Substitute "or."

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as I cannot persuade myself, that you will either forget or neglect this point, concerning the institution of yours, especially having tasted the sweetness thereof, and being descended of so noble and learned a race; for we yet possess the learned compositions of the ancient and noble Earls of Foix,[1] from out whose heroic loins your husband and you take your offspring; and Francis Lord of Candale, your worthy uncle, doth daily bring forth such fruits thereof, as the knowledge of the matchless quality of your house shall hereafter extend itself to many ages; I will therefore, make you acquainted with one conceit of mine, which contrary to the common use I hold, and that is all I am able to afford you, concerning that matter.

The charge of the tutor, which you shall appoint your son, in the choice of whom consisteth the whole substance[2] of his education and bringing-up, on which are many branches depending, which (forasmuch as I can add nothing of any moment to it) I will not touch at all; and for that point, wherein I presume to advise him, he may so far forth give credit unto it as he shall see just cause. To a gentleman born of noble parentage, and heir of a house, that aimeth at true learning, and in it would be disciplined, not so much for gain or commodity to himself (because so abject an end is far unworthy the grace and favour of the Muses, and besides, hath

[1] The Earls or Counts of Foix. Their line began in the eleventh century, and was finally merged in the family of Navarre, Henry of Navarre being also Count de Foix. The most celebrated before him was Gaston de Foix, born 1489, died 1512, on the evening of the battle of Ravenna, which he had just won.

[2] *Substance.*—Substitute "effect."

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a regard or dependency of others) nor for external shew and ornament, but to adorn and enrich his inward mind, desiring rather to shape and institute an able and sufficient man, than a bare learned man. My desire is therefore, that the parents or overseers of such a gentleman be very circumspect, and careful in choosing his director, whom I would rather commend for having a well composed and temperate brain, than a full stuffed head, yet both will do well. And I would rather prefer wisdom, judgment, civil customs, and modest behaviour,[1] than bare and mere literal learning; and that in his charge he hold a new course.

Some never cease brawling in their scholars' ears (as if they were still pouring in a tunnel) to follow their book, yet is their charge nothing else, but to repeat what hath been told them before. I would have a tutor to correct this part, and that at first entrance, according to the capacity of the wit he hath in hand, he should begin to make shew of it, making him to have a smack of all things, and how to choose and distinguish them, without help of others, sometimes opening him the way, other times leaving him to open it by himself. I would not have him to invent and speak alone, but suffer his disciple to speak when his turn cometh. Socrates, and after him Arcesilaus,[2] made their scholars to speak first, and then would speak themselves. "Obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt, auctoritas eorum qui docent" (CIC., *De Nat.*, i.): "Most com-

[1] *Civil customs and modest behaviour.*—Addition to the text.

[2] Greek philosopher, 316–229 B.C.; founder of the second Academy.

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monly the authority of them that teach hinders them that would learn."

It is therefore meet, that he make him first trot on before him, whereby he may the better judge of his pace, and so guess how long he will hold out, that accordingly he may fit his strength: for want of which proportion, we often mar all. And to know how to make a good choice, and how far forth one may proceed (still keeping a due measure) is one of the hardest labours I know. It is a sign of a noble, and effect of an undaunted spirit, to know how to second, and how far forth he shall condescend to his childish proceedings, and how to guide them. As for myself, I can better and with more strength walk up than down a hill.

Those which according to our common fashion, undertake with one selfsame lesson, and like manner of education, to direct many spirits of divers forms and different humours, it is no marvel if among a multitude of children, they scarce meet with two or three that reap any good fruit by their discipline, or that come to any perfection. I would not only have him to demand an account of the words contained in his lesson, but of the sense and substance thereof, and judge of the profit he hath made of it, not by the testimony of his memory, but by the witness of his life; that what he lately learned, he cause him to set forth and portray the same into sundry shapes, and then to accommodate it to as many different and several subjects; whereby he shall perceive, whether he have yet apprehended the same, and therein enfeoffed himself, at due times taking his instruction from the institution given by

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Plato. It is a sign of crudity and indigestion for a man to yield up his meat, even as he swallowed the same: the stomach hath not wrought his full operation, unless it have changed form, and altered fashion of that which was given him to boil and concoct.

[We[1] see men gape after no reputation but learning, and when they say, such a one is a learned man, they think they have said enough.] Our mind doth move at others' pleasure, as tied and forced to serve the fantasies of others, being brought under by authority, and forced to stoop to the lure of their bare lesson; we have been so subjected to harp upon one string, that we have no way left us to descant upon voluntary: our vigour and liberty is clean extinct. "Nunquam tutelæ suæ fiunt": "They never come to their own tuition."

It was my hap to be familiarly acquainted with an honest man at Pisa, but such an Aristotelian, as he held this infallible position; that a conformity to Aristotle's doctrine was the true touchstone and squire of all solid imaginations, and perfect verity; for whatsoever had no coherency with it was but fond chimeras, and idle humours; inasmuch as he had known all, seen all, and said all. This proposition of his, being somewhat over-amply and injuriously interpreted by some, made him a long time after to be troubled in the inquisition of Rome.

I would have him make his scholar narrowly to sift all things with discretion, and harbour nothing in his head by mere authority, or upon trust. Aristotle's principles shall be no more axioms unto him,

[1] This bracketed passage is F.'s, not Montaigne's.

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than the Stoics' or Epicureans'. Let this diversity of judgments be proposed unto him: if he can, he shall be able to distinguish the truth from falsehood; if not, he will remain doubtful.

Che non men che saper dubbiar m'aggrada.
DANTE, *Inferno*, cant. xii., 48.

No less it pleaseth me,
To doubt, than wise to be.

For if by his own discourse he embrace the opinions of Xenophon, or of Plato, they shall be no longer theirs, but his. He that merely followeth another, traceth nothing, and seeketh nothing: "Non sumus sub rege, sibi quisque se vindicet" (SEN., *Epist.*, xxxiii.): "We are not under a king's command, every one may challenge himself, for let him at least know that he knoweth." It is requisite he endeavour as much to feed himself with their conceits, as labour to learn their precepts; which, so he know how to apply, let him hardly forget where or whence he had them. Truth and reason are common to all, and are no more proper unto him that spake them heretofore, than unto him that shall speak them hereafter. And it is no more according to Plato's opinion, than to mine, since both he and I understand and see alike. The bees do here and there suck this, and cull that flower, but afterward they produce the honey, which is peculiarly their own; then is it no more thyme or marjoram. So of pieces borrowed of others, he may lawfully alter, transform, and confound them, to shape out of them a perfect piece of work, altogether his own; always provided

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his judgment, his travel, study, and institution tend to nothing, but to frame the same perfect. Let him hardly conceal where, or whence he hath had any help, and make no shew of anything, but of that which he hath made himself. Pirates, filchers, and borrowers make a shew of their purchases and buildings, but not of that which they have taken from others: you see not the secret fees or bribes lawyers take of their clients, but you shall manifestly discover the alliances they make, the honours they get for their children, and the goodly houses they build. No man makes open shew of his receipts, but every one of his gettings.

The good that comes of study (or at least should come) is to prove better, wiser, and honester. It is the understanding power (said Epicharmus) that seeth and heareth, it is it that profiteth all, and disposeth all, that moveth, swayeth, and ruleth all: all things else are but blind, senseless, and without spirit. And truly in barring him of liberty to do anything of himself, we make him thereby more servile and more coward. Who would ever enquire of his scholar what he thinketh of rhetoric, of grammar, of this or of that sentence of Cicero? Which things thoroughly feathered (as if they were oracles) are let fly into our memory; in which both letters and syllables are substantial parts of the subject. To know by rote is no perfect knowledge, but to keep what one hath committed to his memory's charge is commendable: what a man directly knoweth, that will he dispose of, without turning still to his book, or looking to his pattern. A mere bookish sufficiency is unpleasant. All I expect of it is an

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embellishing of my actions, and not a foundation of them, according to Plato's mind, who saith constancy, faith, and sincerity are true philosophy; as for other sciences, and tending elsewhere, they are but garish paintings. I would fain have Paluel or Pompey, those two excellent dancers of our time, with all their nimbleness, teach any man to do their lofty tricks, and high capers, only with seeing them done, and without stirring out of his place, as some pedantical fellows would instruct our minds without moving or putting it in practice. And glad would I be to find one that would teach us how to manage a horse, to toss a pie, to shoot off a piece, to play upon the lute, or to warble with the voice, without any exercise, as these kind of men would teach us to judge; and how to speak well, without any exercise of speaking or judging. In which kind of life, or as I may term it, prenticeship, what action or object soever presents itself unto our eyes may serve us instead of a sufficient book. A pretty prank of a boy, a knavish trick of a page, a foolish part of a lackey, an idle tale or any discourse else, spoken either in jest or earnest, at the table or in company, are even as new subjects for us to work upon: for furtherance whereof, commerce or common society among men, visiting of foreign countries, and observing of strange fashions, are very necessary, not only to be able (after the manner of our young gallants of France) to report how many paces the church of Santa Rotonda[1] is in length or breadth,

[1] Santa Rotonda, or Santa Maria della Rotonda, the name given to the Pantheon in Rome, on its being turned into a Christian church.

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or what rich garments the courtesan Signora Livia weareth, and the worth of her hose; or as some do, nicely to dispute how much longer or broader the face of Nero is, which they have seen in some old ruins of Italy, than that which is made for him in other old monuments elsewhere. But they should principally observe, and be able to make certain relation of the humours and fashions of those countries they have seen, that they may the better know how to correct and prepare their wits by those of others. I would therefore have him begin even from his infancy to travel abroad; and first, that at one shoot he may hit two marks, he should see neighbour countries, namely where languages are most different from ours; for, unless a man's tongue be fashioned unto them in his youth, he shall never attain to the true pronunciation of them, if he once grow in years.

Moreover, we see it received as a common opinion of the wiser sort, that it agreeth not with reason, that a child be always nuzzled,[1] cockered, dandled, and brought up in his parents' lap or sight; forsomuch as their natural kindness, or (as I may call it) tender fondness, causeth often even the wisest to prove so idle, so over-nice, and so base-minded. For parents are not capable, neither can they find in their hearts to see them checked, corrected, or chastised, nor endure to see them brought up so meanly, and so far from daintiness, and many times so dangerously, as they must needs be. And it would grieve them to see their children come home from those exercises that a gentleman must necessarily acquaint himself with, sometimes all wet and

[1] *Always nuzzled.*—The text has merely *nourri* ("nurtured").

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bemired, other times sweaty, and full of dust, and to drink being either extreme hot, or exceeding cold; and it would trouble them to see him ride a rough-tamed horse, or with his weapon furiously encounter a skilful fencer, or to handle and shoot off a musket; against which there is no remedy, if he will make him prove a sufficient, complete, or honest man: he must not be spared in his youth; and it will come to pass, that he shall many times have occasion and be forced to shock the rules of physic.

Vitamque sub dio et trepidis agat
In rebus. Hor., i., *Od.*, ii., 4.

Leads he his life in open air,
And in affairs full of despair.

It is not sufficient to make his mind strong, his muscles must also be strengthened: the mind is overborne if it be not seconded: and it is too much for her alone to discharge two offices. I have a feeling how mine panteth, being joined to so tender and sensible a body, and that lieth so heavy upon it. And in my lecture,[1] I often perceive how my authors in their writings sometimes commend examples for magnanimity and force that rather proceed from a thick skin and hardness of the bones.

I have known men, women, and children born of so hard a constitution, that a blow with a cudgel would less hurt them than a fillip would do me, and so dull and blockish, that they will neither stir tongue nor eyebrows, beat them never so much.

[1] *Lecture*, *i. e.*, reading.

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When wrestlers go about to counterfeit the philosophers' patience, they rather shew the vigour of their sinews, than of their heart. For the custom to bear travail is to tolerate grief: "Labor callum obducit dolori" (CIC., *Tusc. Qu.*, ii.): "Labour worketh a hardness upon sorrow." He must be inured to suffer the pain and hardness of exercises, that so he may be induced to endure the pain of the colic, of cautery, of falls, of sprains, and other diseases incident to man's body: yea, if need require, patiently to bear imprisonment, and other tortures, by which sufferance[1] he shall come to be had in more esteem and account: for according to time and place, the good as well as the bad man may haply fall into them; we have seen it by experience. Whosoever striveth against the laws threats good men with mischief and extortion.

Moreover, the authority of the tutor (who should be sovereign over him) is, by the cockering and presence of the parents, hindered and interrupted: besides, the awe and respect which the household bears him, and the knowledge of the means, possibilities, and greatness of his house are in my judgment no small lets in a young gentleman.

In this school of commerce, and society among men, I have often noted this vice, that in lieu of taking acquaintance of others, we only endeavour to make ourselves known to them: and we are more ready to utter such merchandise as we have than to engross and purchase new commodities. Silence and modesty are qualities very convenient to civil conversation. It is also necessary, that a young man be

[1] *By which sufferance, etc.*—Addition to the text.

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rather taught to be discreetly sparing and close-handed, than prodigally wasteful and lavish in his expenses, and moderate in husbanding his wealth when he shall come to possess it, and not to take pepper in the nose for every foolish tale that shall be spoken in his presence, because it is an uncivil importunity to contradict whatsoever is not agreeing to our humour: let him be pleased to correct himself. And let him not seem to blame that in others which he refuseth to do himself, nor go about to withstand common fashions. "Licet sapere sine pompa, sine invidia" (SEN., *Epist.*, ciii.): "A man may be wise without ostentation, without envy." Let him avoid those imperious images of the world, those uncivil behaviours, and childish ambition, [wherewith[1] God wot, too-too many are possessed:] that is, to make a fair shew of that, which is not in him: endeavouring to be reputed other than indeed he is; and as if reprehension and new devices were hard to come by, he would by that means acquire unto himself the name of some peculiar virtue. As it pertaineth but to great poets to use the liberty of arts; so is it tolerable but in noble minds, and great spirits to have a pre-eminence above ordinary fashions. "Si quid Socrates et Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur licere. Magis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequebantur (CIC., *Off.*, i.): "If Socrates and Aristippus have done aught against custom or good manner, let not a man think he may do the same: for they obtained this license by their great and excellent good parts." He shall be

[1] The bracketed passage is F.'s, not Montaigne's.

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taught not to enter rashly into discourse or contesting but when he shall encounter with a champion worthy his strength; and then would I not have him employ all the tricks that may fit his turn, but only such as may stand him in most stead. That he be taught to be curious in making choice of his reasons, loving pertinency, and by consequence brevity. That above all, he be instructed to yield, yea to quit his weapons unto truth, as soon as he shall discern the same, whether it proceed from his adversary, or upon better advice from himself, for he shall not be preferred to any place of eminence above others for repeating of a prescribed part; and he is not engaged to defend any cause further than he may approve it; nor shall he be of that trade, where the liberty for a man to repent and readvise himself is sold for ready money. "Neque, ut omnia, quæ præscripta et imperata sint, defendat, necessitate ulla cogitur" (CIC., *Acad. Qu.*, iv.): "Nor is he enforced by any necessity to defend and make good all that is prescribed and commanded him."

If his tutor agree with my humour, he shall frame his affection to be a most loyal and true subject to his prince, and a most affectionate and courageous gentleman, in all that may concern the honour of his sovereign, or the good of his country, and endeavour to suppress in him all manner of affection to undertake any action otherwise than for a public good and duty. Besides many inconveniences, which greatly prejudice our liberty, by reason of these particular bonds, the judgment of a man that is waged and bought, either it is less free and honest, or else it is blemished with oversight and ingratitude.

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A mere and precise courtier can neither have law nor will to speak or think otherwise than favourably of his master, who among so many thousands of his subjects hath made choice of him alone, to institute and bring him up with his own hand. These favours, with the commodities that follow minion courtiers, corrupt (not without some colour of reason) his liberty and dazzle his judgment. It is therefore commonly seen, that the courtier's language differs from other men's, in the same state, and to be of no great credit in such matters.

Let therefore his conscience and virtue shine in his speech, and reason be his chief direction. Let him be taught to confess such faults as he shall discover in his own discourses, albeit none other perceive them but himself; for it is an evident shew of judgment, and effect of sincerity, which are the chiefest qualities he aimeth at. That wilfully to strive, and obstinately to contest in words, are common qualities, most apparent in basest minds; that to re-advise and correct himself, and, when one is most earnest, to leave an ill opinion, are rare, noble, and philosophical conditions. Being in company, he shall be put in mind to cast his eyes round about, and everywhere: for I note that the chief places are usually seized upon by the most unworthy and less capable, and that height of fortune is seldom joined with sufficiency. I have seen, that whilst they at the upper end of a board were busy entertaining themselves with talking of the beauty of the hangings about a chamber, or of the taste of some good cup of wine, many good discourses at the lower end have utterly been lost. He shall weigh the carriage

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of every man in his calling, a herdsman, a mason, a stranger, or a traveller; all must be employed; every one according to his worth; for all helps to make up household; yea, the folly and the simplicity of others shall be as instructions to him. By controlling the graces and manners of others he shall acquire into himself envy of the good, and contempt of the bad.

Let him hardly be possessed with an honest curiosity to search out the nature and causes of all things: let him survey whatsoever is rare and singular about him; a building, a fountain, a man, a place where any battle hath been fought, or the passages of Cæsar or Charlemagne.

Quæ tellus sit lenta gelu, quæ putris ab æstu,
Ventus in Italiam quis bene vela ferat.

PROP., iv., *El.*, iii., 39.

What land is parched with heat, what clogged with frost,
What wind drives kindly to th' Italian coast.

He shall endeavour to be familiarly acquainted with the customs, with the means, with the state, with the dependances and alliances of all princes; they are things soon and pleasant to be learned, and most profitable to be known.

In this acquaintance of men, my meaning is, that he chiefly comprehend them that live but by the memory of books. He shall, by the help of histories, inform himself of the worthiest minds that were in the best ages. It is a frivolous study, if a man list, but of invaluable worth to such as can make use of it; and, as Plato saith, the only study

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the Lacedemonians reserved for themselves. What profit shall he not reap, touching this point, reading the Lives of our Plutarch? Always conditioned the master bethink himself whereto his charge tendeth, and that he imprint not so much in his scholar's mind the date of the ruin of Carthage, as the manners of Hannibal and Scipio, nor so much where Marcellus died, as because he was unworthy of his devoir he died there: that he teach him not so much to know histories, as to judge of them. It is, amongst things[1] that best agree with my humour, the subject to which our spirits do most diversely apply themselves. I have read in Titus Livius a number of things, which peradventure others never read, in whom Plutarch haply read a hundred more than ever I could read, and which perhaps the author himself did never intend to set down. To some kind of men, it is a mere grammatical study, but to others a perfect anatomy of philosophy, by means whereof the secretest part of our nature is searched into. There are in Plutarch many ample discourses most worthy to be known: for in my judgment he is the chief work-master of such works, whereof there are a thousand, whereat he hath but slightly glanced; for with his finger he doth but point us out a way to walk in, if we list; and is sometimes pleased to give but a touch at the quickest and main point of a discourse, from whence they are by diligent study to be drawn, and so brought into open market, as that saying of his, that the inhabitants of Asia served but one alone, because they

[1] *Amongst things, etc.*—Montaigne says: "According to my meaning."

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could not pronounce one only syllable, which is "Non," gave perhaps both subject and occasion to my friend Boetie [1] to compose his books of voluntary servitude. If it were no more but to see Plutarch wrest a slight action to man's life or a word that seemeth to bear no such sense, it will serve for a whole discourse. It is pity men of understanding should so much love brevity; without doubt their reputation is thereby better, but we the worse. Plutarch had rather we should commend him for his judgment than for his knowledge; he loveth better to leave a kind of longing desire in us of him, than a satiety. He knew very well, that even in good things, too much may be said; and that Alexandridas did justly reprove him, who spake very good sentences to the Ephores, but they were over-tedious. "Oh stranger," quoth he, "thou speakest what thou oughtest, otherwise than thou shouldest." Those that have lean and thin bodies stuff them up with bumbasting. And such as have but poor matter, will puff it up with lofty words.

There is a marvellous clearness, or as I may term it, an enlightening of man's judgment drawn from the commerce of men, and by frequenting abroad in the world: we are all so contrived and compact in ourselves, that our sight is made shorter by [2] the length of our nose. When Socrates was demanded whence he was, he answered, not of Athens, but of the world; for he, who had his imagination more

[1] Boetie, Etienne de la Boétie. See *infra*, Chap. XI., *Of Friendship*.

[2] *Shorter by*.—Substitute "as short as."

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full, and farther stretching, embraced all the world for his native city, and extended his acquaintance, his society, and affections to all mankind, and not as we do, that look no further than our feet. If the frost chance to nip the vines about my village, my priest doth presently argue that the wrath of God hangs over our head, and threateneth all mankind: and judgeth that the pippe is already fallen upon the cannibals. In viewing these intestine and civil broils of ours, who doth not exclaim that this world's vast frame is near unto a dissolution, and that the day of judgment is ready to fall on us? never remembering that many worse revolutions have been seen, and that whilst we are plunged in grief, and overwhelmed in sorrow, a thousand other parts of the world besides are blessed with all happiness, and wallow in pleasures, and never think on us? whereas, when I behold our lives, our license, and impunity, I wonder to see them so mild and easy. He on whose head it haileth thinks all the hemisphere besides to be in a storm and tempest. And as that dull-pated Savoyard said, that if the silly King of France could cunningly have managed his fortune, he might very well have made himself chief steward of his lord's household, whose imagination conceived no other greatness than his master's, we are all insensible of this kind of error: an error of great consequence and prejudice. But whosoever shall present unto his inward eyes, as it were in a table, the idea of the great image of our universal mother Nature, attired in her richest robes, sitting in the throne of her majesty, and in her visage shall read so general and so constant a

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variety, he that therein shall view himself, not himself alone, but a whole kingdom, to be in respect of a great circle, but the smallest point that can be imagined, he only can value things according to their essential greatness and proportion.

This great universe (which some multiply as species under one genus) is the true looking-glass wherein we must look, if we will know whether we be of a good stamp or in the right bias. [To conclude, I would have this world's frame to be my scholar's choice book. So many strange humours, sundry sects, varying judgments, diverse opinions, different laws, and fantastical customs teach us to judge rightly of ours, and instruct our judgment to acknowledge his imperfections and natural weakness, which is no easy an apprenticeship.] So many innovations of estates, so many falls of princes, and changes of public fortune, may, and ought to teach us not to make so great account of ours. So many names, so many victories, and so many conquests buried in dark oblivion makes the hope to perpetuate our names but ridiculous, by the surprising of ten argolettiers,[1] or of a small cottage, which is known but by his fall. The pride and fierceness of so many strange and gorgeous shews, the pride-puffed majesty of so many courts, and of their greatness, ought to confirm and assure our sight undauntedly to bear the affronts and thunderclaps of ours, without sealing our eyes. So many thousands of men low-laid in their graves afore us may encourage us not to fear, or be dismayed to go meet so good company in the other world; and so

[1] Argolettiers, horse soldiers, or dragoons, as they are now called.

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of all things else. Our life (said Pythagoras) draws near unto the great and populous assemblies of the Olympic games, wherein some, to get the glory and to win the goal of the games, exercise their bodies with all industry; others, for greediness of gain, bring thither merchandise to sell: others there are (and those be not the worst) that seek after no other good, but to mark how, wherefore, and to what end, all things are done; and to be spectators or observers of other men's lives and actions, that so they may be the better judge and direct their own.

Unto examples may all the most profitable discourses of philosophy be sorted, which ought to be the touchstone of human actions, and a rule to square them by, to whom may be said,

> *—quid fas optare, quid asper*
> *Utile nummus habet, patriæ charisque propinquis*
> *Quantum elargiri deceat, quem te Deus esse*
> *Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re,*
> *Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur.*
>
> PERS., *Sat.*, iii., 69.

What thou mayest wish, what profit may come clear,
From new-stamped coin, to friends and country dear,
What thou ought'st give: whom God would have thee be,
And in what part mongst men he placed thee.
What we are, and wherefore,
To live here we were bore.

What it is to know, and not to know (which ought to be the scope of study) what valor, what temperance, and what justice is: what difference there is between ambition and avarice, bondage and freedom, subjection and liberty, by which marks a man may distinguish true and perfect contentment, and

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how far forth one ought to fear or apprehend death, grief, or shame;

Et quo quemque modo fugidtque ferdtque laborem ;
VIRG., *Æn.*, viii., 853.

How ev'ry labour he may ply,
And bear, or ev'ry labour fly;

what wards or springs move us, and the causes of so many motions in us: for me seemeth that the first discourses wherewith his conceit should be sprinkled ought to be those that rule his manners, and direct his sense; which will both teach him to know himself, and how to live, and how to die well. Among the liberal sciences, let us begin with that which makes us free. Indeed, they may all in some sort stead us, as an instruction to our life, and use of it, as all other things else serve the same to some purpose or other. But let us make especial choice of that which may directly and pertinently serve the same. If we could restrain and adapt the appurtenances of our life to their right bias and natural limits, we should find the best part of the sciences that now are in use clean out of fashion with us: yea, and in those that are most in use, there are certain byways and deep-flows most profitable, which we should do well to leave, and according to the institution of Socrates, limit the course of our studies in those where profit is wanting.

sapere aude,
Incipe : vivendi qui rectè prorogat horam,
Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille,
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.
HOR., i., *Epist.*, ii., 40.

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Be bold to be wise: to begin, be strong,
He that to live well doth the time prolong,
Clown-like expects, till down the stream be run;
That runs, and will run, till the world be done.

It is more simplicity to teach our children

Quid moveant Pisces, animosaque signa Leonis,
Lotus et Hesperia quid Capricornus aqua,
PROP., iv., *El.*, i., 89.

What Pisces move, or hot-breath'd Leos beams,
Or Capricornus bath'd in western streams,

the knowledge of the stars, and the motion of the eighth sphere, before their own.

Τί Πλειάδεσσι κἀμοί; τί δ' ἀστράσι βοώτεω;
ANACREON, *Od.*, xvii., 10.

What longs it to the seven stars, and me,
Or those about Boötes be.

Anaximenes,[1] writing to Pythagoras, saith, "With what sense can I amuse myself to the secrets of the stars, having continually death or bondage before mine eyes?" For at that time the kings of Persia were making preparations to war against his country. All men ought to say so. Being beaten with ambition, with avarice, with rashness, and with superstition, and having such other enemies unto life within me, wherefore shall I study and take care about the mobility and variation of the world?

When he is once taught what is fit to make him

[1] Greek philosopher, lived about 550 to 500 B.C.

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better and wiser, he shall be entertained with[1] logic, natural philosophy, geometry, and rhetoric, then having settled his judgment, look what science he doth most addict himself unto, he shall in short time attain to the perfection of it. His lecture shall be sometimes by way of talk and sometimes by book: his tutor may now and then supply him with the same author, as an end and motive of his institution[2]: sometimes giving him the pith and substance of it ready chewed. And if of himself he be not so thoroughly acquainted with books that he may readily find so many notable discourses as are in them to effect his purpose, it shall not be amiss that some learned man being appointed to keep him company, who at any time of need may furnish him with such munition as he shall stand in need of, that he may afterward distribute and dispense them to his best use. And that this kind of lesson be more easy and natural than that of Gaza,[3] who will make question? Those are but harsh, thorny, and unpleasant precepts, vain, idle, and immaterial words, on which small hold may be taken, wherein is nothing to quicken the mind. In this, the spirit findeth substance to bite and feed upon; a fruit without all comparison much better, and that will soon be ripe.

It is a thing worthy consideration, to see what

[1] *He shall be entertained with.*—Substitute "He will be told what is."

[2] *As an end and motive of his institution.*—Substitute "Adapted to the purpose, etc."

[3] Celebrated grammarian of the fifteenth century, whose Greek grammar was considered very hard for beginners.

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state things are brought unto in this our age; and how philosophy, even to the wisest, and men of best understanding, is but an idle, vain, and fantastical name, of small use, and less worth, both in opinion and effect. I think these sophistries are the cause of it, which have forestalled the ways to come unto it: they do very ill, that go about to make it seem as it were inaccessible for children to come unto, setting it forth with a wrimpled, ghastly, and frowning visage; who hath masked her with so counterfeit, pale, and hideous a countenance? There is nothing more beauteous, nothing more delightful, nothing more gamesome; and, as I may say, nothing more fondly wanton: for she presenteth nothing to our eyes, and preacheth nothing to our ears, but sport and pastime. A sad and lowering look plainly declareth that that is not her haunt. Demetrius the grammarian, finding a company of philosophers sitting close together in the temple of Delphos, said unto them, "Either I am deceived, or by your plausible and pleasant looks you are not in any serious and earnest discourse amongst yourselves"; to whom one of them named Heracleon the Megarian answered, "That belongeth to them who busy themselves in seeking whether future tense of the verb *βάλλω* hath a double λ, or that labour to find the derivation of the comparatives, *χεῖρον*, *βέλτιον*, and of the superlatives *χείριστον*, *βέλτιστον*, it is they, that must chafe in entertaining themselves with their science: as for discourses of philosophy they are wont to glad, rejoice, and not to vex and molest those that use them."

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Deprendas animi tormenta latentis in ægro
Corpore, deprendas et gaudia, sumit utrumque
Inde habitum facies.—JUVEN., *Sat.*, ix., 18.

You may perceive the torments of the mind,
Hid in sick body, you the joys may find,
The face such habit takes in either kind.

That mind which harboureth philosophy ought by reason of her sound health, make that body also sound and healthy: it ought to make her contentment to through-shine in all exterior parts: it ought to shape and model all outward demeanours to the model of it: and by consequence arm him that doth possess it with a gracious stoutness and lively audacity, with an active and pleasing gesture, and with a settled and cheerful countenance. The most evident token and apparent sign of true wisdom is a constant and unconstrained rejoicing, whose estate is like unto all things above the moon, that is, ever clear, always bright. It is Baroco and Baralipton, that makes their followers prove so base and idle, and not philosophy; they know her not, but by hearsay. What! Is it not she that cleareth all storms of the mind, and teacheth misery, famine, and sickness to laugh? Not by reason of some imaginary epicycles, but by natural and palpable reasons. She aimeth at nothing but virtue: it is virtue she seeks after; which, as the school saith, is not[1] pitched on the top of an high, steep, or inaccessible hill; for they that have come unto her, affirm that, clean contrary, she keeps her stand, and holds her mansion in a fair, flourishing, and pleasant

[1] *Which as the school saith, is not.*—Substitute "Which is not, as the school saith."

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plain, whence, as from an high watch-tower, she surveyeth all things, to be subject unto her, to whom any man may with great facility come, if he but know the way or entrance to her palace: for the paths that lead unto her are certain fresh and shady green alleys, sweet and flowery ways,[1] whose ascent is even, easy, and nothing wearisome, like unto that of heaven's vaults. Forsomuch as they have not frequented this virtue, who gloriously, as in a throne of majesty sits sovereign, goodly, triumphant, lovely, equally delicious, and courageous, protesting herself to be a professed and irreconcilable enemy to all sharpness, austerity, fear, and compulsion; having nature for her guide, fortune and voluptuousness for her companions; they according to their weakness have imaginarily feigned her to have a foolish, sad, grim, quarrelous, spiteful, threatening, and disdainful visage, with an horrid and unpleasant look; and have placed her, upon a craggy, sharp, and unfrequented rock, amidst desert cliffs, and uncouth crags, as a scarecrow, or bugbear, to affright the common people with.

Now the tutor, which ought to know that he should rather seek to fill the mind, and store the will of his disciple, as much, or rather more, with love and affection than with awe, and reverence unto virtue, may shew and tell him that poets follow common humours, making him plainly to perceive, and as it were palpably to feel, that the gods have rather placed labour and sweat at the entrances which lead to Venus's chambers, than at the doors that direct to Pallas's cabinets.

[1] *Sweet and flowery ways.*—Substitute "sweet-smelling."

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And when he shall perceive his scholar to have a sensible feeling of himself, presenting Bradamante or Angelica before him, as a mistress to enjoy, embellished with a natural, active, generous, and unspotted beauty, not ugly, or giant-like, but blithe and lively, in respect of a wanton, soft, affected, and artificial-flaring beauty; the one attired like unto a young man, coifed with a bright-shining helmet, the other disguised and dressed about the head like unto an impudent harlot, with embroideries, frizellings, and carcanets of pearls: he will no doubt deem his own love to be a man and no woman, if in his choice he differ from that effeminate shepherd of Phrygia.

In this new kind of lesson, he shall declare unto him that the prize, the glory, and height of true virtue consisted in the facility, profit, and pleasure of his exercises[1]: so far from difficulty, and encumbrances, that children as well as men, the simple as soon as the wise, may come unto her. Discretion and temperance, not force or waywardness are the instruments to bring him unto her. Socrates (virtue's chief favourite), that he might the better walk in the pleasant, natural, and open path of her progresses, doth voluntarily and in good earnest, quit all compulsion. She is the nurse and foster-mother of all human pleasures, who in making them just and upright, she also makes them sure and sincere. By moderating them, she keepeth them in use and breath. In limiting and cutting them off, whom she refuseth, she whets us on toward those she leaveth unto us; and plenteously leaves us them,

[1] *His exercises.*—Substitute "Her practice."

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which Nature pleaseth, and like a kind mother giveth us over unto satiety, if not unto wearisomeness, unless we will peradventure say that the rule and bridle, which stayeth the drunkard before drunkenness, the glutton before surfeiting, and the lecher before the losing of his hair, be the enemies of our pleasures. If common fortune fail her, it clearly scapes her; or she cares not for her, or she frames another unto herself, altogether her own, not so fleeting, nor so rolling. She knoweth the way how to be rich, mighty, and wise, and how to lie in sweet-perfumed beds. She loveth life; she delights in beauty, in glory, and in health. But her proper and particular office is, first to know how to use such goods temperately, and how to lose them constantly. An office much more noble than severe, without which all course of life is unnatural, turbulent, and deformed, to which one may lawfully join those rocks, those encumbrances, and those hideous monsters.

If so it happen, that his disciple prove of so different a condition, that he rather love to give ear to an idle fable, than to the report of some noble voyage, or other notable and wise discourse, when he shall hear it; that at the sound of a drum, or clang of a trumpet, which are wont to rouse and arm the youthly heat of his companions, turneth to another that calleth him to see a play, tumbling, juggling tricks, or other idle, lose-time sports; and who for pleasure's sake doth not deem it more delightsome to return all sweaty and weary from a victorious combat, from wrestling, or riding of a horse, than from a tennis-court, or dancing school, with the

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prize or honour of such exercises; the best remedy I know for such a one is, to put him prentice to some base occupation,[1] in some good town or other, yea, were he the son of a duke, according to Plato's rule, who saith that children must be placed, not according to their fathers' conditions, but the faculties of their mind.

Since it is philosophy that teacheth us to live, and that infancy as well as other ages may plainly read her lessons in the same, why should it not be imparted unto young scholars?

Udum et molle lutum est, nunc nunc properandus, et acri Fingendus sine fine rota.—PERS., *Sat.*, iii., 23.

He 's moist and soft mould, and must by and by
Be cast, made up, while wheel whirls readily.

We are taught to live, when our life is well-nigh spent. Many scholars have been infected with that loathsome and marrow-wasting disease, before ever they came to read Aristotle's treatise of Temperance. Cicero was wont to say, that could he but outlive the lives of two men, he should never find leisure to study the lyric poets. And I find these sophisters both worse and more unprofitable. Our child is engaged in greater matters[2], and but the first fifteen or sixteen years of his life are due unto pedantry, the rest unto action: let us therefore employ so short time as we have to live, in more necessary instructions. It is an abuse; remove these thorny quiddities of logic, whereby our life

[1] *Prentice to some base occupation.*—The text says *patissier*, "cake-baker."

[2] *Engaged in greater matters.*—Substitute "in much greater hurry."

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can no whit be amended, and betake ourselves to the simple discourses of philosophy; know how to choose and fitly to make use of them: they are much more easy to be conceived than one of Boccaccio's tales. A child coming from nurse is more capable of them than he is to learn to read or write. Philosophy hath discourses, whereof infancy as well as decaying old age may make good use.

I am of Plutarch's mind, which is, that Aristotle did not so much amuse his great disciple about the arts how to frame syllogisms, or the principles of geometry, as he endeavoured to instruct him with good precepts, concerning valour, prowess, magnanimity, and temperance, and an undaunted assurance not to fear anything; and with such munition he sent him, being yet very young,[1] to subdue the empire of the world, only with 30,000 footmen, 4000 horsemen, and 42,000 crowns in money. As for other arts and sciences; he saith Alexander honoured them, and commended their excellency and comeliness; but for any pleasure he took in them, his affection could not easily be drawn to exercise them.

petite hinc juvenesque senesque
Finem animo certum, miserisque viatica canis.
PERS., *Sat.*, v., 64.

Young men and old, draw hence (in your affairs)
Your minds set mark, provision for grey hairs.

It is that which Epicurus said in the beginning of his letter to Meniceus: "Neither let the youngest shun, nor the oldest weary himself in philosophising,

[1] *Being yet very young.*—Substitute "when no more than a child."

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for who doth otherwise seemeth to say, that either the season to live happily is not yet come, or is already past." Yet would I not have this young gentleman pent up, nor carelessly cast off to the heedless choler, or melancholy humour of the hasty schoolmaster. I would not have his budding spirit corrupted with keeping him fast-tied, and as it were labouring fourteen or fifteen hours a day poring on his book, as some do, as if he were a day-labouring man; neither do I think it fit, if at any time, by reason of some solitary or melancholy complexion, he should be seen with an over-indiscreet application given to his book, it should be cherished in him; for that doth often make him both unapt for civil conversation, and distracts him from better employments. How many have I seen in my days, by an over-greedy desire of knowledge, become as it were foolish? Carneades[1] was so deeply plunged, and as I may say besotted in it, that he could never have leisure to cut his hair, or pare his nails: nor would I have his noble manners obscured by the incivility and barbarism of others. The French wisdom hath long since proverbially been spoken of, as very apt to conceive study in her youth, but most unapt to keep it long. In good truth, we see at this day that there is nothing lovelier to behold than the young children of France; but for the most part, they deceive the hope which was fore-apprehended of them: for when they once become men, there is no excellency at all in them.

I have heard men of understanding hold this opinion, that the colleges to which they are sent (of

[1] Greek philosopher, born about 219 B.C., died about 129.

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which there are store) do thus besot them: whereas to our scholar, a cabinet, a garden, the table, the bed, a solitariness, a company, morning and evening, and all hours shall be alike unto him, all places shall be a study for him: for philosophy (as a former of judgments, and modeller of customs) shall be his principal lesson, having the privilege to intermeddle herself with all things, and in all places. Isocrates the orator, being once requested at a great banquet to speak of his art, when all thought he had reason to answer, said, "It is not now time to do what I can, and what should now be done, I cannot do it"; for to present orations, or to enter into disputation of rhetoric, before a company assembled together to be merry, and make good cheer, would be but a medley of harsh and jarring music. The like may be said of all other sciences. But touching philosophy, namely in that point where it treateth of man, and of his duties and offices, it hath been the common judgment of the wisest, that in regard of the pleasantness of her conversation, she ought not to be rejected, neither at banquets, nor at sports. And Plato having invited her to his solemn feast, we see how kindly she entertaineth the company with a mild behaviour, fitly suiting herself to time and place, notwithstanding it be one of his learnedest and profitable discourses.

Æquè pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æquè,
Et neglecta æquè pueris senibusque nocebit.
HOR., i., *Ep.*, i., 25.

Poor men alike, alike rich men it easeth,
Alike it scorned, old and young displeaseth.

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So doubtless he shall less be idle than others; for even as the paces we bestow walking in a gallery, although they be twice as many more, weary us not so much as those we spend in going a set journey, so our lesson being passed over, as it were, by chance, or way of encounter, without strict observance of time or place, being applied to all our actions, shall be digested, and never felt. All sports and exercises shall be a part of his study; running, wrestling, music, dancing, hunting, and managing of arms and horses. I would have the exterior demeanour or decency, and the disposition of his person to be fashioned together with his mind; for it is not a mind, it is not a body that we erect, but it is a man, and we must not make two parts of him. And as Plato saith, "They must not be erected one without another, but equally be directed, no otherwise than a couple of horses matched to draw in one self-same team." And to hear him, doth he not seem to employ more time and care in the exercises of his body, and to think that the mind is together with the same exercised, and not the contrary?

As for other matters, this institution ought to be directed by a sweet-severe mildness; not as some do, who in lieu of gently bidding children to the banquet of letters, present them with nothing but horror and cruelty. Let me have this violence and compulsion removed; there is nothing that, in my seeming, doth more bastardise and dizzy a well-born and gentle nature. If you would have him stand in awe of shame and punishment, do not so much inure him to it: accustom him patiently to endure sweat and cold, the sharpness of the wind, the heat of the

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sun, and how to despise all hazards. Remove from him all niceness and quaintness in clothing, in lying, in eating, and in drinking: fashion him to all things; that he prove not a fair and wanton-puling boy, but a lusty and vigorous boy. When I was a child, being a man, and now am old, I have ever judged and believed the same. But amongst other things, I could never away[1] with this kind of discipline used in most of our colleges. It had peradventure been less hurtful, if they had somewhat inclined to mildness, or gentle entreaty. It is a very prison of captivated youth, and proves dissolute, in punishing it before it be so. Come upon them when they are going to their lesson, and you hear nothing but whipping and brawling, both of children tormented, and masters besotted with anger and chafing. How wide are they, which go about to allure a child's mind to go to his book, being yet but tender and fearful, with a stern, frowning countenance, and with hands full of rods? Oh wicked and pernicious manner of teaching! which Quintillian hath very well noted, that this imperious kind of authority, namely, this way of punishing of children, draws many dangerous inconveniences within. How much more decent were it, to see their schoolhouses and forms strewed with green boughs and flowers, than with bloody birchen twigs? If it lay in me, I would do as the philosopher Speusippus[2] did, who caused the pictures of Gladness and Joy, of Flora, and of the Graces, to be set up round about his schoolhouse.

[1] *I could never away.*—Substitute "I never was pleased."

[2] Greek philosopher of fourth century B.C., nephew of Plato, and his successor at the head of the Academy.

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Where their profit lieth, there should also be their recreation. Those meats ought to be sugared over, that are healthful for children's stomachs, and those made bitter that are hurtful for them. It is strange to see how careful Plato sheweth himself in framing of his laws about the recreation and pastime of the youth of his city, and how far he extends himself about their exercises, sports, songs, leaping, and dancing, whereof he saith, that severe antiquity gave the conduct and patronage unto the gods themselves, namely, to Apollo, to the Muses, and to Minerva. Mark but how far-forth he endeavoureth to give a thousand precepts to be kept in his places of exercises both of body and mind. As for learned sciences, he stands not much upon them, and seemeth in particular to commend poesy, but for music's sake.

All strangeness and self-particularity in our manners and conditions is to be shunned, as an enemy to society and civil conversation. Who would not be astonished at Demophon's complexion, chief steward of Alexander's household, who was wont to sweat in the shadow, and quiver for cold in the sun? I have seen some to startle at the smell of an apple, more than at the shot of a piece; some to be frighted with a mouse, some ready to cast their gorge at the sight of a mess of cream, and others to be scared with seeing a featherbed shaken: as Germanicus, who could not abide to see a cock, or hear his crowing. There may haply be some hidden property of nature, which in my judgment might easily be removed, if it were taken in time. Institution hath gotten this upon me (I must confess with much ado)

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for, except beer, all things else that are man's food agree indifferently with my taste.

The body being yet supple ought to be accommodated to all fashions and customs; and (always provided his appetites and desires be kept under) let a young man boldly be made fit for all nations and companies; yea, if need be, for all disorders and surfeitings; let him acquaint himself with all fashions; that he may be able to do all things, and love to do none but those that are commendable. Some strict philosophers commend not, but rather blame Callisthenes,[1] for losing the good favour of his master Alexander, only because he would not pledge him as much as he had drunk to him. He shall laugh, jest, dally, and debauch himself with his prince. And in his debauching, I would have him outgo all his fellows in vigour and constancy, and that he omit not to do evil, neither for want of strength or knowledge, but for lack of will. "Multum interest, utrum peccare quis nolit, aut nesciat" (SEN., *Epist.*, xc.): "There is a great difference, whether one have no will, or no wit to do amiss." I thought to have honoured a gentleman (as great a stranger, and as far from such riotous disorders as any is in France) by enquiring of him in very good company, how many times in all his life he had been drunk in Germany, during the time of his abode there, about the necessary affairs of our king; who took it even as I meant it, and answered three times, telling the time and manner how. I know some, who for want of that

[1] Callisthenes, grand-nephew to Aristotle, after being in great favour with Alexander, was murdered by him for reproving his excessive drinking.

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quality have been much perplexed when they have had occasion to converse with that nation. I have often noted with great admiration, that wonderful nature of Alcibiades, to see how easily he could suit himself to so divers fashions, and different humours, without prejudice unto his health; sometimes exceeding the sumptuousness and pomp of the Persians, and now and then surpassing the austerity and frugality of the Lacedemonians, as reformed in Sparta as voluptuous in Ionia.

Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.
HOR., *Epist.*, xvii., 23.

All colours, states, and things are fit
For courtly Aristippus's wit.

Such a one would I frame my disciple,

quem duplici panno patientia velat,
Mirabor, vitæ via si conversa decebit.—Ibid., 25.

Whom patience clothes with suits of double kind,
I muse, if he another way will find.

Personamque feret non inconcinnus utramque.—Ibid., 29.

He not unfitly may
Both parts and persons play.

Lo here my lessons, wherein he that acteth them profiteth more than he that but knoweth them, whom if you see, you hear, and if you hear him, you see him. God forbid, saith somebody in Plato, that to philosophise be to learn many things, and to exercise the arts. "Hanc amplissimam omnium artium bene vivendi disciplinam, vita magis quàm litteris persecuuti sunt" (CIC., *Tusc. Qu.*, iv.):

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"This discipline of living well, which is the amplest of all other arts, they followed rather in their lives, than in their learning or writing." Leo Prince of the Phliasians, enquiring of Heraclides Ponticus, what art he professed, he answered, "Sir, I profess neither art nor science; but I am a philosopher." Some reproved Diogenes that, being an ignorant man, he did nevertheless meddle with philosophy, to whom he replied: "So much the more reason have I, and to greater purpose do I meddle with it." Hegesias prayed him upon a time to read some book unto him; "You are a merry man," said he: "As you choose natural and not painted right and not counterfeit figs to eat, why do you not likewise choose, not the painted and written, but the true and natural exercises?"

He shall not so much repeat, as act his lesson. In his actions shall he make repetition of the same. We must observe[1] whether there be wisdom in his enterprises, integrity in his demeanour, modesty in his gestures, justice in his actions, judgment and grace in his speech, courage in his sickness, moderation in his sports, temperance in his pleasures, order in the government of his house, and indifference in his taste, whether it be flesh, fish, wine, or water, or whatsoever he feedeth upon. "Qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet: quique obtemperet ipse sibi, et decretis pareat" (CIC., *ib.*, ii.): "Who thinks his learning not an ostentation of knowledge, but a law of life, and himself obeys himself, and doth what is decreed."

The true mirror of our discourses is the course of

[1] *We must observe.*—Substitute "He will show."

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our lives. Xeuxidamus answered one that demanded of him why the Lacedemonians did not draw into a book the ordinances of prowess, that so their young men might read them; "it is," saith he, "because they would rather accustom them to deeds and actions, than to books and writings." Compare at the end of fifteen or sixteen years one of these collegial Latinisers, who hath employed all that while only in learning how to speak, to such a one as I mean. The world is nothing but babbling and words, and I never saw man, that doth not rather speak more than he ought, than less. Notwithstanding half our age is consumed that way. We are kept four or five years learning to understand bare words, and to join them into clauses, then as long in proportioning a great body extended into four or five parts; and five more at least ere we can succinctly know how to mingle, join, and interlace them handsomely into a subtle fashion, and into one coherent orb. Let us leave it to those, whose profession is to do nothing else.

Being once on my journey toward Orleans, it was my chance to meet upon that plain that lieth on this side Clery[1] with two Masters of Arts, travelling toward Bordeaux, about fifty paces one from another; far off behind them, I descried a troop of horsemen, their master riding foremost, who was the Earl of Rochefoucauld; one of my servants enquiring of the first of those Masters of Arts, what gentleman he was that followed him, supposing my servant had meant his fellow-scholar, for he had not yet seen the Earl's train, answered pleasantly, "He is no gentle-

[1] Small town, about ten miles distant from Orleans.

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man, sir, but a Grammarian, and I am a Logician." Now, we that contrariwise seek not to frame a Grammarian, nor a Logician, but a complete gentleman, let us give them leave to misspend their time; we have elsewhere, and somewhat else of more import to do. So that our disciple be well and sufficiently stored with matter, words will follow apace; and if they will not follow gently, he shall hale them on perforce. I hear some excuse themselves that they cannot express their meaning, and make a semblance that their heads are so full-stuffed with many goodly things, but for want of eloquence they can neither utter nor make shew of them. It is a mere foppery. And will you know what, in my seeming, the cause is? They are shadows and Chimeras, proceeding of some formless conceptions, which they cannot distinguish or resolve within, and by consequence are not able to produce them, inasmuch as they understand not themselves. And if you but mark their earnestness, and how they stammer and labour at the point of their delivery, you would deem that what they go withal is but a conceiving, and therefore nothing near downlying; and that they do but lick that imperfect and shapeless lump of matter. As for me, I am of opinion, and Socrates would have it so, that he who hath a clear and lively imagination in his mind, may easily produce and utter the same, although it be in Bergamask, or Welsh, and, if he be dumb, by signs and tokens.

Verbdque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.

HOR., *Art Poet.*, 311.

When matter we foreknow,
Words voluntary flow.

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As one said, as poetically in his prose, "Cùm res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt" (SEN., *Controv.*, vii., Proæ.): "When matter hath possessed their minds, they hunt after words"; and another: "Ipsæ res verba rapiunt": "Things themselves will catch and carry words." He knows neither Ablative, Conjunctive, Substantive, nor Grammar, no more doth his lackey, nor any oyster-wife about the streets, and yet if you have a mind to it, he will entertain you your fill, and peradventure stumble as little and as seldom against the rules of his tongue, as the best Master of Arts in France. He hath no skill in rhetoric, nor can he with a preface forestall and captivate the gentle reader's good-will: nor careth he greatly to know it. In good sooth, all this garish painting is easily defaced by the lustre of an inbred, and simple truth; for these dainties and quaint devices serve but to amuse the vulgar sort; unapt and incapable to taste the most solid and firm meat, as Afer very plainly declareth in Cornelius Tacitus. The ambassadors of Samos being come to Cleomenes, King of Sparta, prepared with a long prolix oration, to stir him up to war against the tyrant Policrates, after he had listened a good while unto them, his answer was: "Touching your exordium or beginning I have forgotten it; the middle[1] I remember not; and for your conclusion I will do nothing in it." A fit, and (to my thinking) a very good answer; and the orators were put to such a shift, as they knew not what to reply. And what said another? the Athenians from out two of their cunning architects, were to choose one to erect a notable great

[1] Supply "consequently."

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frame: the one of them more affected and self-presuming presented himself before them, with a smooth fore-premeditated discourse about the subject of that piece of work, and thereby drew the judgments of the common people unto his liking; but the other, in few words, spake thus: "Lords of Athens, what this man hath said, I will perform." In the greatest earnestness of Cicero's eloquence many were drawn into a kind of admiration; but Cato, jesting at it, said, "Have we not a pleasant Consul?" A quick, cunning argument, and a witty saying, whether it go before or come after, it is never out of season. If it have no coherence with that which goeth before, nor with what cometh after, it is good and commendable in itself. I am none of those that think a good rhyme[1] to make a good poem; let him hardly (if so he please) make a short syllable long, it is no great matter: if the invention be rare and good, and his wit and judgment have cunningly played their part, I will say to such a one, he is a good poet, but an ill versifier.

> *Emunctæ naris, durus componere versus.*
> HOR., i., *Sat.*, iv., 8.
> A man whose sense could finely pierce,
> But harsh and hard to make a verse.

Let a man (saith Horace) make his work loose all seams, measures, and joints.

Tempora certa modosque, et quod prius ordine verbum est,
Posterius facias, præponens ultima primis:
Invenias etiam disjecti membra Poetæ.—Ibid., 58, 62.

[1] *Rhyme.*—Montaigne says "rhythm."

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Set times and moods, make you the first word last,
The last word first, as if they were new cast:
Yet find th' unjointed Poets' joints stand fast.

He shall for all that, nothing gainsay himself, every piece will make a good shew. To this purpose answered Menander those that chid him, the day being at hand, in which he had promised a comedy, and had not begun the same, "Tut-tut," said he, "it is already finished, there wanteth nothing but to add the verse unto it": for, having ranged and cast the plot in his mind, he made small account of[1] feet, of measures, or cadences of verses, which indeed are but of small import in regard of the rest. Since great Ronsard[2] and learned Bellay have raised our French poesy unto that height of honour, where it now is, I see not one of these petty ballad-makers, or prentice-doggerel rhymers, that doth not bombast his labours with high-swelling and heaven-disembowelling words, and that doth not marshal his cadences very near as they do. "Plus sonat quàm valet" (SEN., *Epist.*, xl.): "The sound is more than the weight or worth." And for the vulgar sort, there were never so many poets, and so few good,[3] but as it hath been easy for them to represent their rhymes,[4] so come they far short in imitating the rich descriptions of the one, and rare inventions of the other.

[1] For the remainder of this sentence, substitute simply "the rest."

[2] *Ronsard.*—Pierre de Ronsard, 1524–1585, the greatest French poet of the sixteenth century, the head of the Pleiade. Joachim du Bellay, his chief associate.

[3] *And so few good.*—Addition to the text.

[4] *Rhymes.*—Substitute "rhythms."

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But what shall he do, if he be urged with sophistical subtleties about a syllogism? A gammon of bacon makes a man drink, drinking quencheth a man's thirst, ergo, a gammon of bacon quencheth a man's thirst. Let him mock at it, it is more witty to be mocked at, than to be answered. Let him borrow this pleasant counter-craft of Aristippus[1]; "Why shall I unbind that, which being bound doth so much trouble me?" Some one proposed certain logical quiddities against Cleanthes,[2] to whom Chrysippus[2] said; use such juggling tricks to play with children, and divert not the serious thoughts of an aged man to such idle matters. If such foolish wiles, "Cantorta et aculeata sophismata" (CIC., *Acad. Qu.*, iv.): "Intricate and stinged sophisms," must persuade a lie, it is dangerous; but if t ey prove void of any effect, and move him but to laughter, I see not why he shall beware of them. Some there are so foolish that will go a quarter of a mile out of the way to hunt after a quaint new word, if they once get in chase; "Aut qui non verba rebus aptant, sed res extrinsecus arcessunt, quibus verba conveniant" (QUINTIL, viii., 3): "Or such as fit not words to matter, but fetch matter from abroad, whereto words be fitted." And another, "Qui alicuius verbi decore placentis, vocentur ad id quod non proposuerunt scribere" (SEN., *Epist.*, lix.): "Who are allured by the grace of some pleasing word to write that they intended not to write." I do more willingly wind up a witty notable sentence, that so

[1] Greek philosopher, upholder of the hedonistic theory, originally a disciple of Socrates; lived in fourth century B. C.

[2] Stoic philosopher of third century B.C.

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I may sew it upon me, than unwind my thread to go fetch it. Contrariwise, it is for words to serve and wait upon the matter, and not for matter to attend upon words, and if the French tongue cannot reach unto it, let the Gascony, or any other. I would have the matters to surmount, and so fill the imagination of him that hearkeneth, that he have no remembrance at all of the words. It is a natural, simple, and unaffected speech that I love, so written as it is spoken, and such upon the paper, as it is in the mouth, a pithy, sinewy, full, strong, compendious, and material speech, not so delicate and affected, as vehement and piercing,

> *Hæc demum sapiet dictio, quæ feriet;*
> *Epitaph Lucan.*, 6.
>
> In fine, that word is wisely fit,
> Which strikes the fence, the mark doth hit;

rather difficult than tedious, void of affectation, free, loose, and bold, that every member of it seem to make a body; not pedantical, nor friar-like, nor lawyer-like, but rather downright, soldier-like; as Suetonius calleth that of Julius Cæsar, which I see no reason wherefore he calleth it.

I have sometimes pleased myself in imitating that licentiousness or wanton humour of our youths, in wearing of their garments; as carelessly to let their cloaks hang down over one shoulder; to wear their cloaks scarf or baldricwise, and their stockings loose hanging about their legs. It represents a kind of disdainful fierceness of these foreign embellishings, and neglect carelessness of art: but I commend

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it more being employed in the course and form of speech. All manner of affectation, namely in the liveliness and liberty of France, is unseemly in a courtier. And in a monarchy every gentleman ought to address himself unto a courtier's carriage. Therefore do we well somewhat to incline to a native and careless behaviour. I like not a contexture, where the seams and pieces may be seen: as in a well compact body, what need a man distinguish and number all the bones and veins severally? "Quæ veritati operam dat oratio, incomposita sit et simplex. Quis accuratè loquitur, nisi qui vult putidè loqui?" (SEN., *Epist.*, xl., m., lxxv., p.): "The speech that intendeth truth must be plain and unpolished. Who speaketh elaborately, but he that means to speak unsavouredly?" That eloquence offereth injury unto things, which altogether draws us to observe it. As in apparel, it is a sign of pusillanimity for one to mark himself in some particular and unusual fashion, so likewise in common speech, for one to hunt after new phrases, and unaccustomed quaint words, proceedeth of a scholastical and childish ambition. Let me use none other than are spoken in the halls[1] of Paris. Aristophanes the Grammarian[2] was somewhat out of the way, when he reproved Epicurus for the simplicity of his words and the end of his art oratory, which was only perspicuity in speech. The imitation of speech, by reason of the facility of it, followeth presently a

[1] *I. e.*, in the market-place. Malherbe similarly said that for his words he went to the hay market.

[2] This namesake of the great comic writer was born in Byzantium about 200 B.C.

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whole nation. The imitation of judging and inventing comes more slow. The greater number of readers, because they have found one selfsame kind of gown, suppose most falsely to hold one like body. Outward garments and cloaks may be borrowed, but never the sinews and strength of the body. Most of those that converse with me speak like unto these essays; but I know not whether they think alike. The Athenians (as Plato averreth) have for their part great care to be fluent and eloquent in their speech; the Lacedemonians endeavour to be short and compendious; and those of Crete labour more to be plentiful in conceits than in language. And these are the best. Zeno[1] was wont to say that he had two sorts of disciples; the one he called φιλολόγους, "curious to learn things," and those were his darlings, the other he termed λογοφίλους, who respected nothing more than the language. Yet can no man say, but that to speak well, is most gracious and commendable, but not so excellent as some make it: and I am grieved to see how we employ most part of our time about that only. I would first know mine own tongue perfectly, then my neighbour's with whom I have most commerce.

I must needs acknowledge, that the Greek and Latin tongues are great ornaments in a gentleman, but they are purchased at over-high a rate. Use it who list, I will tell you how they may be gotten better cheap, and much sooner than is ordinarily used, which was tried in myself. My late father, having by all the means and industry that is possible

[1] Founder of the Stoic philosophy; lived in fourth and third centuries B.C.

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for man sought amongst the wisest, and men of best understanding, to find a most exquisite and ready way of teaching, being advised of the inconveniences then in use, was given to understand, that the lingering while, and best part of our youth, that we employ in learning the tongues, which cost them nothing, is the only cause we can never attain to that absolute perfection of skill and knowledge of the Greeks and Romans. I do not believe that to be the only cause. But so it is, the expedient my father found out was this; that being yet at nurse, and before the first loosing of my tongue, I was delivered to a German (who died since, a most excellent physician in France), he being then altogether ignorant of the French tongue, but exquisitely ready and skilful in the Latin. This man, whom my father had sent for of purpose, and to whom he gave very great entertainment, had me continually in his arms, and was mine only overseer. There were also joined unto him two of his countrymen, but not so learned; whose charge was to attend, and now and then to play with me; and all these together did never entertain me with other than the Latin tongue. As for others of his household, it was an inviolable rule that neither himself, nor my mother, nor man, nor maid-servant, were suffered to speak one word in my company, except such Latin words as every one had learned to chat and prattle with me. It were strange to tell how every one in the house profited therein. My father and my mother learned so much Latin, that for a need they could understand it, when they heard it spoken; even so did all the household servants, namely, such as were nearest

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and most about me. To be short, we were all so Latinised, that the towns round about us had their share of it; insomuch as even at this day, many Latin names both of workmen and of their tools are yet in use among them. And as for myself, I was about six years old, and could understand no more French or Perigordine than Arabic, and that without art, without books, rules, or grammar, without whipping or whining. I had gotten as pure a Latin tongue as my master could speak; the rather because I could neither mingle or confound the same with other tongues. If for an essay they would give me a theme,[1] whereas the fashion in colleges is to give it in French, I had it in bad Latin, to reduce the same into good. And Nicholas Grucchi,[2] who hath written, *De comitiis Romanorum*, William Guerenti,[3] who hath commented Aristotle: George Buchanan,[4] that famous Scottish poet, and Marc Antoine Muret,[5] whom (while he lived) both France and Italy to this day acknowledge to have been the best orator: all which have been my familiar tutors, have often told me, that in mine infancy I had the Latin tongue so ready and so perfect,

[1] A theme, in French college parlance, is a translation from the vernacular into the language studied.

[2] Celebrated Greek scholar of the Renaissance, born about 1520, died 1572. His name in French was Nicholas Grouchy.

[3] Guillaume de Guérente, one of the professors in the Collège de Guyenne.

[4] The celebrated Scotchman, known especially for his beautiful Latin works. He taught for several years in the Collège de Guyenne. He wrote no less than four Latin tragedies.

[5] Marc Antoine Muret, celebrated humanist, also one of Montaigne's teachers in the Collège de Guyenne. The latter part of his life was spent in Rome.

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that themselves feared to take me in hand. And Buchanan, whom afterward I saw attending on the Marshal of Brissac, told me, he was about to write a treatise of the institution of children, and that he took the model and pattern from mine: for at that time he had the charge and bringing up of the young Earl of Brissac,[1] whom since we have seen prove so worthy and so valiant a captain.

As for the Greek, wherein I have but small understanding, my father purposed to make me learn it by art; but by new and unaccustomed means, that is, by way of recreation and exercise. We did toss our declinations and conjugations to and fro, as they do, who by way of a certain game at tables learn both arithmetic and geometry. For, amongst other things he had especially been persuaded to make me taste and apprehend the fruits of duty and science by an unforced kind of will, and of mine own choice; and without any compulsion or rigour to bring me up in all mildness and liberty: yea, with such kind of superstition, that, whereas some are of opinion, that suddenly to awaken young children, and as it were by violence to startle and fright them out of their dead sleep in a morning (wherein they are more heavy and deeper plunged than we) doth greatly trouble and distemper their brains, he would every morning cause me to be awakened by the sound of some instrument; and I was never without a servant who to that purpose attended upon me.

This example may serve to judge of the rest, as also to commend the judgment and tender affection of so careful and loving a father, who is not to be

[1] Member of the illustrious family of Cossé-Brissac.

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blamed, though he reaped not the fruits answerable to his exquisite toil and painful manuring. Two things hindered the same; first the barrenness and unfit soil: for howbeit I were of a sound and strong constitution, and of a tractable and yielding condition, yet was I so heavy, so sluggish, and so dull that I could not be roused (yea, were it to go to play) from out mine idle drowsiness. What I saw, I saw it perfectly; and under this heavy, and as it were Lethe complexion did I breed hardy imaginations, and opinions far above my years. My spirit was very slow, and would go no farther than it was led by others; my apprehension blockish, my invention poor; and besides, I had a marvellous defect in my weak memory: it is therefore no wonder, if my father could never bring me to any perfection. Secondly, as those that in some dangerous sickness, moved with a kind of hopeful and greedy desire of perfect health again, give ear to every leech or empiric, and follow all counsels, the good man being exceedingly fearful to commit any oversight, in a matter he took so to heart, suffered himself at last to be led away by the common opinion, which like unto the cranes, followeth ever those that go before, and yielded to custom, having those no longer about him, that had given him his first directions, and which they had brought out of Italy. Being but six years old I was sent to the Collège de Guyenne,[1] then most flourishing and reputed the best in France, where it is impossible to add anything to the great care he had, both to choose the best and most sufficient masters that could be found, to read

[1] See Introduction.

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unto me, as also for all other circumstances pertaining to my education; wherein, contrary to usual customs of colleges, he observed many particular rules. But so it is, it was ever a college. My Latin tongue was forthwith corrupted, whereof by reason of discontinuance, I afterward lost all manner of use: which new kind of institution stood me in no other stead but that at my first admittance it made me to over-skip some of the lower forms, and to be placed in the highest. For at thirteen years of age, that I left the college, I had read over the whole course of philosophy[1] (as they call it), but with so small profit, that I can now make no account of it.

The first taste or feeling I had of books was of the pleasure I took in reading the fables of Ovid's *Metamorphoses;* for, being but seven or eight years old, I would steal and sequester myself from all other delights, only to read them, forsomuch as the tongue wherein they were written was to me natural, and it was the easiest book I knew, and by reason of the matter therein contained most agreeing with my young age. For of King Arthur, of Lancelot du Lake, of Amadis, of Huon of Bordeaux, and such idle time consuming, and wit-besotting trash of books wherein youth doth commonly amuse itself, I was not so much as acquainted with their names, and to this day know not their bodies, nor what they contain[2]: so exact was my discipline, whereby

[1] *Of philosophy.*—Addition to the text.

[2] It need hardly be said that Montaigne here alludes only to the popular deformations of the mediæval poems, the originals of which were in his time totally forgotten.

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I became more careless to study my other prescript lessons. And well did it fall out for my purpose, that I had to deal with a very discreet master, who out of his judgment could with such dexterity wink at, and second my untowardliness, and such other faults that were in me. For by that means, I read over Virgil's *Æneid*, Terence, Plautus, and other Italian comedies, allured thereunto by the pleasantness of their several subjects: had he been so foolishly severe, or so severely froward as to cross this course of mine, I think verily I had never brought anything from the College, but the hate and contempt of books, as doth the greatest part of our nobility. Such was his discretion, and so warily did he behave himself, that he saw and would not see: he would foster and increase my longing: suffering me but by stealth, and by snatches to glut myself with those books; holding ever a gentle hand over me, concerning other regular studies. For, the chiefest thing my father required at their hands (unto whose charge he had committed me) was a kind of well-conditioned mildness and facility of complexion. And, to say truth, mine had no other fault, but a certain dull languishing, and heavy slothfulness. The danger was not, I should do ill, but that I should do nothing.

No man did ever suspect I would prove a bad, but an unprofitable man: foreseeing in me rather a kind of idleness, than a voluntary craftiness. I am not so self-conceited but I perceive what hath followed. The complaints that are daily buzzed in mine ears are these; that I am idle, cold, and negligent in offices of friendship, and duty to my parents,

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and kinsfolks; and touching public offices, that I am over singular and disdainful. And those that are most injurious cannot ask wherefore I have taken, and why I have not paid? but may rather demand why I do not quit, and wherefore I do not give? I would take it as a favour, they should [1] wish such effects of supererogation in me. But they are unjust and over partial, that will go about to exact that from me which I owe not, with more rigour than they will exact from themselves that which they owe; wherein if they condemn me, they utterly cancel both the gratifying of the action and the gratitude which thereby would be due to me. Whereas the active well doing should be of more consequence, proceeding from my hand, in regard I have no passive at all. Wherefore I may so much the more freely dispose of my fortune, by how much more it is mine, and of myself that am most mine own. Notwithstanding, if I were a great blazoner of mine own actions, I might peradventure bar such reproaches, and justly upbraid some, that they are not so much offended, because I do not enough, as for that I may, and it lies in my power to do much more than I do.

Yet my mind ceased not at the same time to have peculiar unto itself well settled motions, true and open judgments concerning the objects which it knew; which alone, and without any help or communication it would digest. And amongst other things I verily believe it would have proved altogether incapable and unfit to yield unto force, or stoop unto violence. Shall I account or relate this

[1] Supply "only."

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quality of my infancy, which was a kind of boldness in my looks, and gentle softness in my voice, and affability in my gestures, and a dexterity in conforming myself to the parts I undertook? for before the age of the

Alter ab undecimo tum me vix ceperat annus:
VIRG., *Buc. Ecl.*, viii., 39.

Years had I (to make even)
Scarce two above eleven;

I have undergone and represented the chiefest parts in the Latin tragedies of Buchanan, Guerenti, and of Muret; which in great state were acted and played in our Collège de Guyenne: wherein[1] Andreas Goveanus[2] our Rector principal; who as in all other parts belonging to his charge, was without comparison the chiefest Rector of France, and myself (without ostentation be it spoken) was reputed, if not a chief master, yet a principal actor in them. It is an exercise I rather commend than disallow in young gentlemen: and have seen some of our princes (in imitation of some of former ages) both commendably and honestly, in their proper persons act and play some parts in tragedies. It hath heretofore been esteemed a lawful exercise and a tolerable profession in men of honour, namely, in Greece. "Aristoni tragico actori rem aperit: huic et genus et fortuna

[1] For the rest of this sentence substitute "Andreas Goveanus, the principal of our school, was, as well as in all the other parts of his charge, without comparison the greatest principal in France, and I was considered the best worker."

[2] André de Govéa, celebrated Portuguese scholar, born 1497, died 1548; was for thirteen years (1534–1547) principal of the Collège de Guyenne.

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honesta erant: nec ars quia nihil tale apud Græcos pudori est, ea deformabat" (Liv., dec. iii., 4): "He imparts the matter to Ariston, a player of tragedies, whose progeny and fortune were both honest; nor did his profession disgrace them, because no such matter is a disparagement amongst the Grecians."

And I have ever accused them of impertinence, that condemn and disallow such kinds of recreations, and blamed those of injustice, that refuse good and honest comedians, or (as we call them) players, to enter our good towns, and grudge the common people such public sports. Politic and well-ordered commonwealths endeavour rather carefully to unite and assemble their citizens together, as in serious offices of devotion, so in honest exercises of recreation. Common society and loving friendship is thereby cherished and increased. And besides, they cannot have more formal and regular pastimes allowed them, than such as are acted and represented in open view of all, and in the presence of the magistrates themselves: and if I might bear sway, I would think it reasonable that princes should sometimes, at their proper charges, gratify the common people with them, as an argument of a fatherly affection and loving goodness towards them; and that in populous and frequented cities, there should be theatres and places appointed for such spectacles, as a diverting of worse inconveniences, and secret actions.

But to come to my intended purpose, there is no better way than to allure the affection, and to entice the appetite: otherwise a man shall breed but asses

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laden with books. With jerks of rods they have their satchels full of learning given them to keep, which to do well one must not only harbour in himself, but wed and marry the same with his mind.

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CHAPTER XV

OF FRIENDSHIP

CONSIDERING the proceeding of a painter's work I have, a desire hath possessed me to imitate him: he maketh choice of the most convenient place and middle of every wall, there to place a picture, laboured with all his skill and sufficiency; and all void places about it he filleth up with antique Boscage or Crotesko works; which are fantastical pictures, having no grace, but in the variety and strangeness of them. And what are these my compositions, in truth, other than antique works and monstrous bodies, patched and huddled up together of divers members, without any certain or well-ordered figure, having neither order, dependency, nor proportion, but casual and framed by chance?

Desinit in piscem mulier formosa supernè.
HOR., *Art. Poet.*, 4.

A woman fair for parts superior
Ends in a fish for parts inferior.

Touching this second point I go as far as my painter, but for the other and better part I am far behind: for my sufficiency reacheth not so far, as that I dare undertake a rich, a polished, and accord-

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ing to true skill, an art-like table. I have advised myself to borrow one of Steven de la Boétie, who with this kind of work shall honour all the world. It is a discourse he entitled, *Voluntary Servitude*, but those who have not known him,[1] have since very properly rebaptised the same, "The against one." In his first youth he writ, by way of essay, in honour of liberty against tyrants. It hath long since been dispersed amongst men of understanding, not without great and well-deserved commendations: for it is full of wit, and containeth as much learning as may be: yet doth it differ much from the best he can[2] do. And if in the age I knew him in, he would have undergone my design, to set his fantasies down in writing, we should doubtless see many rare things, and which would very nearly approach the honour of antiquity: for especially touching that part of nature's gifts, I know none may be compared to him. But it was not long of him, that ever this treatise came to man's view,[3] and I believe he never saw it since it first escaped his hands: with certain other notes concerning the edict of January,[4] famous by reason of our intestine war, which haply may in other places find their deserved praise. It is all I could ever recover of his relics (whom[5] when death seized, he by his last will and testament left with

[1] *Him.*—Substitute "that."

[2] *Can*—Substitute "could."

[3] For the beginning of this sentence substitute "But there remained of him nothing but this treatise, and that by accident."

[4] Edict of January, 1562, rendered in the name of Charles IX. by his mother, Catherine de' Medici, and granting religious freedom to Protestants.

[5] *Whom* relates to "I."

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so kind remembrance heir and executor of his library and writings) besides the little book I since caused to be published: To which his pamphlet I am particularly most bounden, forsomuch as it was the instrumental means of our first acquaintance. For it was shewed me long time before I saw him, and gave me the first knowledge of his name, addressing, and thus nourishing that unspotted friendship which we (so long as it pleased God) have so sincerely, so entire and inviolably maintained between us, that truly a man shall not commonly hear of the like; and amongst our modern men no sign of any such is seen. So many parts are required to the erecting of such a one, that it may be counted a wonder, if fortune once in three ages contract the like.

There is nothing to which Nature hath more addressed us than to society. And Aristotle saith that (perfect law-givers have had more regardful care of friendship than of justice.) And the utmost drift of its perfection is this. For generally, all those amities which are forged and nourished by voluptuousness or profit, public or private need, are thereby so much the less fair and generous, and so much the less true amities, in that they intermeddle other causes, scope, and fruit with friendship than itself alone: nor do those four ancient kinds of friendships, natural, social, hospitable, and venerian, either particularly or conjointly beseem the same.

That from children to parents may rather be termed respect. Friendship is nourished by communication, which by reason of the over-great disparity cannot be found in them, and would haply

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offend the duties of nature: for neither all the secret thoughts of parents can be communicated unto children, lest it might engender an unbeseeming familiarity between them, nor the admonitions and corrections (which are the chiefest offices of friendship) could be exercised from children to parents. There have nations been found, where, by custom, children killed their parents, and others, where parents slew their children, thereby to avoid the hindrance of enter-bearing one another in after-times: for naturally one dependeth from the ruin of another. There have philosophers been found disdaining this natural conjunction, witness Aristippus, who being urged with the affection he owed his children, as proceeding from his loins, began to spit, saying that also that excrement proceeded from him, and that also we engendered worms and lice. And that other man, whom Plutarch would have persuaded to agree with his brother, answered, "I care not a straw the more for him, though he came out of the same womb I did." Verily the name of brother is a glorious name, and full of loving kindness, and therefore did he and I term one another sworn brother: but this commixture, dividence, and sharing of goods, this joining wealth to wealth, and that the riches of one shall be the poverty of another, doth exceedingly distemper and distract all brotherly alliance and lovely conjunction: if brothers should conduct the progress of their advancement and thrift in one same path and course, they must necessarily oftentimes hinder and cross one another. Moreover, the correspondence and relation that begetteth these true and

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mutually perfect amities, why shall it be found in these? The father and the son may very well be of a far differing complexion, and so may brothers: he is my son, he is my kinsman; but he may be a fool, a bad, or a peevish-minded man. And then according as they are friendships which the law and duty of nature doth command us, so much the less of our own voluntary choice and liberty is there required unto it: and our genuine liberty hath no production more properly her own than that of affection and amity. Sure I am, that concerning the same I have assayed all that might be, having had the best and most indulgent father that ever was, even to his extremest age, and who from father to son was descended of a famous house, and touching this rare-seen virtue of brotherly concord very exemplar:

—et ipse
Notus in fratres animi paterni.—HOR., ii., *Od.* ii., 6.
To his brothers known so kind,
As to bear a father's mind.

To compare the affection toward women unto it, although it proceed from our own free choice, a man cannot, nor may it be placed in this rank: her fire, I confess it

(*neque enim est dea nescia nostri*
Quæ dulcem curis miscet amaritiem,)
CATUL., lxviii., 17.
(Nor is that goddess ignorant of me,
Whose bitter-sweets with my cares mixèd be,)

to be more active, more fervent, and more sharp.

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But it is a rash and wavering fire, waving and divers: the fire of an ague subject to fits and stints, and that hath but slender holdfast of us. In true friendship, it is a general and universal heat, and equally tempered, a constant and settled heat, all pleasure and smoothness, that hath no pricking or stinging in it. Nay, in love it is

Come segue la lepre il cacciatore
Al freddo, al caldo, alla montagna, al lito,
Ne piu l'estima poi che presa vede,
E sol dietro a chi fugge affretta il piede.

ARIOS., can. x., st. 7.

Ev'n as the huntsman doth the hare pursue,
In cold, in heat, on mountains, on the shore,
But cares no more, when he her ta'en espies,
Speeding his pace, only at that which flies.

As soon as it creepeth into the terms of friendship, that is to say, in the agreement of wills, it languisheth and vanisheth away: enjoying doth lose it, as having a corporal end, and subject to satiety. On the other side, friendship is enjoyed according as it is desired, it is neither bred, nor nourished, nor increaseth but in jouissance, as being spiritual, and the mind being refined by use and custom. Under this chief amity, these fading affections have sometimes found place in me, lest I should speak of him, who in his verses speaks but too much of it. So are these two passions entered into me in knowledge one of another, but in comparison never: the first flying a high, and keeping a proud pitch, disdainfully beholding the other to pass her points far under it.

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Concerning marriage, besides that it is a covenant which hath nothing free but the entrance, the continuance being forced and constrained, depending elsewhere than from our will, and a match ordinarily concluded to other ends, a thousand strange knots are therein commonly to be unknit, able to break the web, and trouble the whole course of a lively affection; whereas in friendship, there is no commerce or business depending on the same, but itself. Seeing (to speak truly) that the ordinary sufficiency of women cannot answer this conference and communication, the nurse of this sacred bond: nor seem their minds strong enough to endure the pulling of a knot so hard, so fast, and durable. And truly, if without that, such a genuine and voluntary acquaintance might be contracted, where not only minds had this entire jouissance, but also bodies a share of the alliance, and where a man might wholly be engaged, it is certain that friendship would thereby be more complete and full; but this sex could never yet by any example attain unto it, and is by ancient schools rejected thence.

. . . . . .

I return to my description in a more equitable and equal manner. "Omnino amicitiæ corroboratis jam confirmatisque ingeniis et ætatibus judicandæ sunt" (CIC., *Tusc.* iv., 34): "Clearly friendships are to be judged by wits, and ages already strengthened and confirmed." As for the rest, those we ordinarily call friends and amities are but acquaintances and familiarities tied together by some occasion or commodities, by means whereof our minds are entertained. In the amity I speak of, they intermix

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and confound themselves one in the other, with so universal a commixture that they wear out, and can no more find the seam that hath conjoined them together. If a man urge me to tell wherefore I loved him, I feel it cannot be expressed, but by answering; because it was he, because it was myself. There is beyond all my discourse, and besides what I can particularly report of it, I know not what inexplicable and fatal power, a mean and mediatrix of this indissoluble union. We sought one another before we had seen one another and by the reports we heard one of another; which wrought a greater violence in us than the reason of reports may well bear: I think by some secret ordinance of the heavens, we embraced one another by our names, and at our first meeting, which was by chance at a great feast and solemn meeting of a whole township,[1] we found ourselves so surprised, so known, so acquainted, and so combinedly bound together, that from thenceforward nothing was so near unto us as one unto another. He writ an excellent Latin satire since published; by which he excuseth and expoundeth the precipitation of our acquaintance, so suddenly come to her perfection; since it must continue so short a time, and begun so late (for we were both grown men, and he some years older[2] than myself) there was no time to be lost. And it was not to be modelled or directed by the pattern of regular and remiss friendship, wherein so many precautions of a long and preallable conversation are required. This hath no other idea than of

[1] *A whole township.*—Substitute "a reception of townspeople."

[2] Exactly three years.

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itself, and can have no reference but to itself. It is not one especial consideration, nor two, nor three, nor four, nor a thousand; it is I wot not what kind of quintessence of all this commixture, which, having seized all my will, induced the same to plunge and lose itself in his, which likewise having seized all his will, brought it to lose and plunge itself in mine, with a mutual greediness, and with a semblable concurrence, I may truly say, lose, reserving nothing unto us that might properly be called our own, nor that was either his, or mine.

When Lelius in the presence of the Roman consuls, who after the condemnation of Tiberius Gracchus, pursued all those that had been of his acquaintance, came to inquire of Caius Blosius (who was one of his chiefest friends) what he would have done for him, and that he answered, "All things." "What? All things?" was the next question. "And what if he had willed thee to burn our temples?" Blosius answered, "He would never have commanded such a thing." "But what if he had done it?" replied Lelius. The other answered, "I would have obeyed him." If he were so perfect a friend to Gracchus as histories report, he needed not offend the consuls with this last and bold confession, and should not have departed from the assurance he had of Gracchus his mind. But yet those who accuse this answer as seditious understand not well this mystery, and do not presuppose in what terms he stood, and that he held Gracchus his will in his sleeve, both by power and knowledge. They were rather friends than citizens, rather friends than enemies of their country or friends of ambition and trouble.

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Having absolutely committed themselves one to another, they perfectly held the reins of one another's inclination; and let this yoke be guided by virtue and conduct of reason (because without them it is altogether impossible to combine and proportion the same). The answer of Blosius was such as it should be. If their affections miscarried, according to my meaning, they were neither friends one to other, nor friends to themselves. As for the rest, this answer sounds no more than mine would do, to him that would in such sort enquire of me; if your will should command you to kill your daughter, would you do it? and that I should consent unto it: for, that beareth no witness of consent to do it: because I am not in doubt of my will, and as little of such a friend's will. It is not in the power of the world's discourse to remove me from the certainty I have of his intentions and judgments of mine: no one of its actions might be presented unto me, under what shape soever, but I would presently find the spring and motion of it. Our minds have jumped so unitedly together, they have with so fervent an affection considered of each other, and with like affection so discovered and sounded, even to the very bottom of each other's heart and entrails, that I did not only know his as well as mine own, but I would (verily) rather have trusted him concerning any matter of mine, than myself.

Let no man compare any of the other common friendships to this. I have as much knowledge of them as another, yea of the perfectest of their kind: yet will I not persuade any man to confound their rules, for so a man might be deceived. In these

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other strict friendships a man must march with the bridle of wisdom and precaution in his hand; the bond is not so strictly tied but a man may in some sort distrust the same. "Love him" (said Chilon[1]) "as if you should one day hate him again. Hate him as if you should love him again." This precept, so abominable in this sovereign and mistress amity, is necessary and wholesome in the use of vulgar and customary friendship, toward which a man must employ the saying Aristotle was wont so often to repeat, "Oh, you, my friends, there is no perfect friend."[2]

In this noble commerce, offices and benefits (nurses of other amities) deserve not so much as to be accounted of: this confusion so full of our wills is cause of it: for even as the friendship I bear unto myself admits no accrease by any succour I give myself in any time of need, whatsoever the Stoics allege; and as I acknowledge no thanks unto myself for any service I do unto myself, so the union of such friends, being truly perfect, makes them lose the feeling of such duties, and hate and expel from one another these words of division and difference; benefit, good deed, duty, obligation, acknowledgment, prayer, thanks, and such their like. All things being by effect common between them; wills, thoughts, judgments, goods, wives, children, honour, and life; and their mutual agreement being no other than one soul in two bodies, according to the fit definition of Aristotle, they can neither lend or give

[1] One of the seven wise men of Greece.

[2] *There is no perfect friend.*—Substitute "there is no such thing as a friend."

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aught to each other. See here the reason why law-makers, to honour marriage with some imaginary resemblance of this divine bond, inhibit donations between husband and wife; meaning thereby to infer, that all things should peculiarly be proper to each of them, and that they have nothing to divide and share together.

If in the friendship whereof I speak one might give unto another, the receiver of the benefit should bind his fellow. For, each seeking more than any other thing to do each other good, he who yields both matter and occasion is the man that sheweth himself liberal, giving his friend that contentment, to effect towards him what he desireth most. When the philosopher Diogenes wanted money, he was wont to say that he re-demanded the same of his friends, and not that he demanded it: and to shew how that is practised by effect, I will relate an ancient singular example. Eudamidas the Corinthian had two friends. Charixenus a Sicyonian, and Aretheus a Corinthian; being upon his deathbed, and very poor, and his two friends very rich, thus made his last will and testament: "To Aretheus I bequeath the keeping of my mother, and to maintain her when she shall be old: To Charixenus the marrying of my daughter, and to give her as great a dowry as he may: and in case one of them shall chance to die before, I appoint the survivor to substitute his charge, and supply his place."[1] Those that first saw this testament, laughed and mocked at the same; but his heirs being advertised thereof, were very well pleased, and received it with singular

[1] Lucian, *Toxaris On Friendship.*

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contentment. And Charixenus, one of them, dying five days after Eudamidas, the substitution being declared in favour of Aretheus, he carefully, and very kindly kept and maintained his mother, and of five talents that he was worth, he gave two and a half in marriage to one only daughter he had, and the other two and a half to the daughter of Eudamidas, whom he married[1] both in one day.

This example is very ample, if one thing were not, which is the multitude of friends; for this perfect amity I speak of is indivisible; each man doth so wholly give himself unto his friend, that he hath nothing left him to divide elsewhere: moreover he is grieved that he is not double, triple, or quadruple, and hath not many souls, or sundry wills, that he might confer them all upon this subject. Common friendships may be divided; a man may love beauty in one, facility of behaviour in another, liberality in one, and wisdom in another, paternity in this, fraternity in that man, and so forth: but this amity which possesseth the soul, and sways it in all sovereignty, it is impossible it should be double. If two at one instant should require help, to which would you run? Should they crave contrary offices of you, what order would you follow? Should one commit a matter to your silence, which if the other knew would greatly profit him, what course would you take? Or how would you discharge yourself? A singular and principal friendship dissolveth all other duties, and freeth all other obligations. The secret I have sworn not to reveal to another, I may without perjury impart it unto him; who is no other

[1] *I. e.*, gave in marriage.

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but myself. It is a great and strange wonder for a man to double himself; and those that talk of tripling, know not, nor cannot reach unto the height of it. "Nothing is extreme, that hath his like." And he who shall presuppose, that of two I love the one as well as the other, and that they enterlove one another, and love me as much as I love them, he multiplieth in brotherhood a thing most singular, and alonely one, and than which one alone is also the rarest to be found in the world. The remainder of this history agreeth very well with what I said; for Eudamidas giveth as a grace and favour to his friends to employ them in his need: he leaveth them as his heirs of his liberality, which consisteth in putting the means into their hands to do him good. And doubtless the force of friendship is much more richly shewn in his deed than in Aretheus's. To conclude, they are unimaginable effects to him that hath not tasted them; and which makes me wonderfully to honour the answer of that young soldier to Cyrus, who, enquiring of him what he would take for a horse, with which he had lately gained the prize of a race, and whether he would change him for a kingdom? "No surely my liege," said he, "yet would I willingly forego him to gain a true friend, could I but find a man worthy of so precious an alliance." He said not ill, in saying, "could I but find." For a man shall easily find men fit for a superficial acquaintance; but in this, wherein men negotiate from the very centre of their hearts, and make no spare of anything, it is most requisite, all the wards and springs be sincerely wrought, and perfectly true.

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In confederacies, which hold but by one end, men have nothing to provide for but for the imperfections, which particularly do interest and concern that end and respect. It is no great matter what religion my physician and lawyer is of: this consideration hath nothing common with the offices of that friendship they owe me. So do I in the familiar acquaintances that those who serve me contract with me. I am nothing inquisitive whether a lackey be chaste or no, but whether he be diligent: I fear not a gaming muleteer, so much as if he be weak; nor a hot swearing cook, as one that is ignorant and unskilful: I never meddle with saying what a man should do in the world; there are over-many others that do it; but what myself do in the world.

Mihi sic usus est: Tibi, ut opus est facto, face.
TER., *Heau.*, Act. I., sc. i., 28.
So is it requisite for me;
Do thou as needful is for thee.

Concerning familiar table-talk, I rather acquaint myself with, and follow a merry conceited humour, than a wise man: and in bed I rather prefer beauty, than goodness; and in society or conversation of familiar discourse, I respect rather sufficiency, though without Preud'hommie,[1] and so of all things else. Even as he that was found riding upon an hobby-horse, playing with his children, besought him, who thus surprised him, not to speak of it, until he were a father himself, supposing the tender

[1] F. here uses the French word *prud'hommie;* he might have translated it by "wisdom united with goodness."

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fondness, and fatherly passion, which then would possess his mind, should make him an impartial judge of such an action, so would I wish to speak to such as had tried what I speak of: but knowing how far such an amity is from the common use, and how seld seen and rarely found, I look not to find a competent judge. For even the discourses, which stern antiquity hath left us concerning this subject seem to me but faint and forceless in respect of the feeling I have of it: and in that point the effects exceed the very precepts of philosophy.

Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.
HOR., i., *Sat.*, v., 44.

For me, be I well in my wit,
Nought, as a merry friend, so fit.

Ancient Menander accounted him happy that had but met the shadow of a true friend: verily he had reason to say so, especially if he had tasted of any: for truly, if I compare all the rest of my forepassed life, which although I have by the mere mercy of God, past at rest and ease, and except the loss of so dear a friend, free from all grievous affliction, with an ever-quietness of mind, as one that have taken my natural and original commodities in good payment, without searching any others: if, as I say, I compare it all unto the four years,[1] I so happily enjoyed the sweet company, and dear-dear society of that worthy man, it is nought but a vapour, nought but a dark and irksome night. Since the time I lost him,

[1] La Boétie died in 1563; Montaigne and he must therefore have met first in 1559; Montaigne was then twenty-six years of age.

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quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum (sic Dii voluistis) habebo.
VIRG., *Æn.*, v., 49.

Which I shall ever hold a bitter day,
Yet ever-honour'd (so my God t' obey).

I do but languish, I do but sorrow: and even those pleasures all things present me with, instead of yielding me comfort, do but redouble the grief of his loss. We were co-partners in all things. All things were with us at half: methinks I have stolen his part from him.

Nec fas esse ulla me voluptate hîc frui
Decrevi, tantisper dum ille abest meus particeps.
TER., *Heau.*, Act I., scen. i., 97.

I have set down, no joy enjoy I may,
As long as he my partner is away.

I was so accustomed to be ever two, and so inured to be never single that methinks I am but half myself.

Illam meæ si partem animæ tulit,
Maturior vis, quid moror altera,
Nec charus æquè nec superstes,
Integer? Ille dies utramque
Duxit ruinam.—HOR., ii., *Od.* xvii., 5.

Since that part of my soul riper fate reft me,
Why stay I here the other part he left me?
Nor so dear, nor entire, while here I rest:
That day hath in one ruin both opprest.

There is no action can betide me, or imagination possess me, but I hear him saying, as indeed he

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would have done to me: for even as he did excel me by an infinite distance in all other sufficiencies and virtues, so did he in all offices and duties of friendship.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus,
Tam chari capitis?—Ibid., i. *Od.* xxiv., 1.

What modesty or measure may I bear,
In want and wish of him that was so dear?

O misero frater adempte mihi!
Omnia tecum unà perierunt gaudia nostra,
Quæ tuus in vita dulcis alebat amor.
Tu mea, tu moriens fregisti commoda frater,
Tecum unà tota est nostra sepulta anima,
Cujus ego interitu tota de mente fugavi
Hæc studia, atque omnes delicias animi.
CATUL., lxviii., 20.

Alloquar? audiero nunquam tua verba eloquentem?
Nunquam ego te vita frater amabilior,
Aspiciam posthac? at certè semper amabo.
CATUL., lxv., 9.

O brother reft from miserable me,
All our delights are perished with thee,
Which thy sweet love did nourish in my breath.
Thou all my good hast spoiled in thy death:
With thee my soul is all and whole enshrined,
At whose death I have cast out of my mind
All my mind's sweetmeats, studies of this kind.

Never shall I hear thee speak, speak with thee?
Thee brother, than life dearer, never see?
Yet shalt thou ever be belov'd of me.

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But let us a little hear this young man speak, being but sixteen years of age.

Because[1] I have found this work to have since been published (and to an ill end) by such as seek to trouble and subvert the state of our commonwealth, nor caring whether they shall reform it or no; which they have fondly inserted among other writings of their invention, I have revoked my intent, which was to place it here. And lest the author's memory should any way be interested with those that could not thoroughly know his opinions and actions, they shall understand, that this subject was by him treated of in his infancy, only by way of exercise, as a subject common, bare-worn, and wire-drawn in a thousand books. I will never doubt but he believed what he writ, and writ as he thought: for he was so conscientious that no lie did ever pass his lips, yea, were it but in matters of sport or play: and I know, that had it been in his choice, he would rather have been born at Venice, than at Sarlat; and good reason why. But he had another maxim deeply imprinted in his mind, which was, carefully to obey, and religiously to submit himself to the laws, under which he was born. There was never a better citizen, nor more affected to the welfare and quietness of his country, nor a sharper enemy of the changes, innovations, new-fangles, and hurly-burlys of his time: he would more willingly have employed the utmost of his endeavours to extinguish and suppress, than to favour or further them: his mind was

[1] Montaigne alludes here to the publication of his friend's treatise in 1574, 1576, and seq., by the Protestants, whom he always disapproved of as disturbers of the peace.

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modelled to the pattern of other best ages. But yet in exchange of his serious treatise, I will here set you down another, more pithy, material, and of more consequence, by him likewise produced in that tender age.[1]

[1] The promise made by Montaigne in the last sentence of his essay on "Friendship," is fulfilled in the following chapter, Chapter XXVIII. of his First Book, wherein he inserts twenty-nine sonnets by Étienne de la Boétie.

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CHAPTER XVI

THAT A MAN OUGHT SOBERLY TO MEDDLE WITH JUDGING OF DIVINE LAWS

THINGS unknown are the true scope of imposture, and subject of legerdemain: forasmuch as strangeness itself doth first give credit unto matters, and not being subject to our ordinary discourses, they deprive us of means to withstand them. To this purpose, said Plato, "it is an easy[1] matter to please, speaking of the nature of the gods, than of men's." For the auditors' ignorance lends a fair and large career, and free liberty, to the handling of secret hidden matters. Whence it followeth, that nothing is so firmly believed, as that which a man knoweth least; nor are there people more assured in their reports, than such as tell us fables, as alchemists, prognosticators, fortune-tellers, palmesters, physicians, "id genus omne," and such like. To which, if I durst, I would join a rabble of men, that are ordinary interpreters and controllers of God's secret designs, presuming to find out the causes of every accident, and to pry into the secrets of God's divine will, the incomprehensible motives of his works. And howbeit the continual variety and discordance of events drive them from one corner to

[1] *Easy.*—Substitute "easier."

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another, and from east to west, they will not leave to follow their bowl, and with one small pencil draw both white and black.

There is this commendable observance in a certain Indian nation, who, if they chance to be discomfited in any skirmish or battle, they publicly beg pardon of the sun, who is their god, as for an unjust action, referring their good or ill fortune to divine reason, submitting their judgment and discourses unto it. It sufficeth a Christian to believe that all things come from God, to receive them from his divine and inscrutable wisdom with thanksgiving, and in what manner soever they are sent him, to take them in good part. But I utterly disallow a common custom amongst us, which is to ground and establish our religion upon the prosperity of our enterprises. Our belief hath other sufficient foundations, and need not be authorised by events. For the people accustomed to these plausible arguments, and agreeing with their taste, when events sort contrary and disadvantageous to their expectation, they are in hazard to waver in their faith: as in the civil wars, wherein we are now for religion's sake, those which got the advantage, at the conflict of Rochelabeille,[1] making great joy and bonfires for that accident, and using that fortune as an assured approbation of their faction: when afterward they come to excuse their disaster of Moncontour and Jarnac, which are scourges and fatherly chastisements: if they have not a people wholly at their mercy, they will easily

[1] *Rochelabeille, Moncontour, Jarnac.*—Encounters in the religious wars of France, in the first of which the Huguenots were victorious, while they were defeated in the other two.

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make him perceive what it is to take two kinds of corn out of one sack: and from one and the same mouth to blow both hot and cold. It were better to entertain it with the true foundations of verity. It was a notable sea battle [1] which was lately gained against the Turks, under the conduct of Don John of Austria. But it hath pleased God to make us at other times both see and feel other such, to our no small loss and detriment. To conclude, it is no easy matter to reduce divine things unto our balance so they suffer no impeachment: and he that would yield a reason, why Arius [2] and Leo his Pope, chief principals and main supporters of this heresy, died both at several times of so semblable and so strange deaths (for being forced through a violent belly-ache to go from their disputations to their close-stool, both suddenly yielded up their ghosts on them) and exaggerate that divine vengeance by the circumstance of the place, might also add the death of Heliogabalus unto it, who likewise was slain upon a privy. But what? Ireneus is found to be engaged in like fortune: God's intent being to teach us, that the good have something else to hope for, and the wicked somewhat else to fear, than the good or bad fortune of this world, he manageth and applieth them according to his secret disposition, and depriveth us of the means, thereby foolishly to make our profit. And those that according to human reason will thereby prevail, do but mock them-

[1] The battle of Lepanto, October 7, 1571, in which the Turks suffered a signal defeat at the hands of Don John of Austria, the natural son of Emperor Charles V.

[2] Arius, the celebrated heresiarch of the fourth century.

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selves. They never give one touch of it, that they receive not two for it. St. Augustine giveth a notable trial of it upon his adversaries. It is a conflict, no more decided by the arms of memory, than by the weapons of reason. A man should be satisfied with the light, which it pleaseth the sun to communicate unto us by virtue of his beams; and he that shall lift up his eyes to take a greater within his body, let him not think it strange, if for a reward of his overweening and arrogance he loseth his sight. "Quis hominum potest scire consilium Dei? aut quis poterit cogitare, quid velit dominus?" (*Sapient.*, ix., 13): "Who amongst men can know God's counsel, or who can think what God will do?"

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CHAPTER XVII

HOW WE WEEP AND LAUGH AT ONE SELFSAME THING

WHEN we read in histories that Antigonus was highly displeased with his son, at what time he presented unto him the head of King Pyrrhus his enemy, slain but a little before in fight against him; which he no sooner saw, but he burst forth a-weeping, and that René, Duke of Lorraine,[1] wept for the death of Charles,[2] Duke of Burgundy, whom he had eftsoon discomfited, and was as an assistant mourner at his funerals; and that in the battle of Auray[3] (which the Earl of Montfort had gained against the faction of Charles de Blois, for the Duchy of Brittany) the victorious conqueror met with the body of his enemy deceased, mourned very grievously for him; a man must not suddenly exclaim.

E cosie auvien', che l'animo ciascuna
Sua passion, sotto contrario manto
Ricuopre, con la vista hor chiara, hor bruna.

PET.

[1] René de Vaudemont, Duc de Lorraine, 1473–1508, defeated Charles the Bold of Burgundy, the latter dying in the battle, under the walls of Nancy, 1477.

[2] Charles the Bold.

[3] One of the fiercest encounters of the one hundred years' war, in which Duguesclin was made a prisoner by John Chandos, 1364.

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So happens it, the mind covers each passion
Under a cloak of colours opposite,
To sight now clear, now dark, in divers fashion.

When Cæsar was presented with Pompey's head, histories report that he turned his looks aside, as from a ghastly and unpleasing spectacle. There hath been so long a correspondence and society in the managing of public affairs, mutually between them, such a community of fortunes, so many reciprocal offices and bonds of alliance, that a man cannot think his countenance to have been forced, false, and wily, as this other supposeth;

tutumque putavit
Jam bonus esse socer, lacrymas non sponte cadentes
Effudit gemitusque expressit pectore læto.
LUCAN., ix., 1040.

Now to be kind indeed he did not doubt
Father-in-law, tears, which came hardly out
He shed, and groans expressed
From inward pleasèd breast.

For certainly, howbeit the greatest number of our actions be but masked and painted over with dissimulation, and that it may sometimes be true,

Hæredis fletus sub persona risus est,
AUL. GELL., *Noct. Att.*, xvii., c. 14,

the weeping of an heir is laughing under a visard or disguise,

yet must a man consider by judging of his accidents how our minds are often agitated by divers passions; for (as they say) there is a certain assembly of divers

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humours in our bodies, whereof she is sovereign mistress, who most ordinarily, according to our complexions doth command us: so in our mind, although it contain several motions that agitate the same, yet must one chiefly be predominant. But it is not with so full an advantage, but for the volubility and suppleness of our mind, the weakest may by occasion re-obtain the place again, and when their turn cometh, make a new charge, whence we see, not only children, who simply and naturally follow nature, often to weep and laugh at one selfsame thing; but none of us all can vaunt himself, what wished-for, or pleasant voyage soever he undertake, but that taking leave of his family and friends, he shall feel a chilling and panting of the heart, and if he shed not tears, at least he puts his foot in the stirrup with a sad and heavy cheer. And what gentle flame soever doth warm the heart of young virgins, yet are they hardly drawn to leave and forego their mothers, to betake them to their husbands, whatsoever this good fellow says:

Est ne novis nuptis odio Venus, dnne parentum
Frustrantur falsis gaudia lacrymulis,
Ubertim thalami quas intra limina fundunt?
Non, ita me divi, vera gemunt, juverint.
CATUL., *Eleg.*, ii., 15.

Do young birds hate indeed fresh Venus'toys,
Or with false tears delude their parents' joys,
Which in their chambers they pour out amain?
So help me God, they do not true complain.

So is it not strange to mourn for him dead, whom a man by no means would have alive again. When

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I chide my boy[1] I do it with the best heart I have: they are true and not feigned imprecations: but that fit passed over, let him have need of me, I will gladly do him all the good I can, and by and by I turn over another leaf. If I chance to call one knave or ass, my purpose is not for ever to enfeoff him with those nicknames; nor do I think to say, tongue, thou liest, if immediately after I call him an honest man. No quality doth embrace us purely and universally. If it were not the countenance of a fool to speak alone, or to himself, there would scarce be day, or hour, wherein somebody should not hear me mutter and grumble to myself, and against myself. A ( )[2] in the fool's teeth, yet do not I think it to be my definition. He that seeth me sometimes to cast a frowning look upon my wife, or sometimes a loving countenance, and thinks, that either of them is but feigned, he is a fool. Nero taking leave of his mother, whom he sent to be drowned, felt notwithstanding the emotion of that motherly farewell, and at one instant was stricken with horror and pity. It is said that the sun's light is not of one continued piece, but that it so incessantly and without intermission doth cast so thick new rays, one in the neck of another upon us, that we cannot perceive the space between them.

Largus enim liquidi fons luminis æthereus sol
Inrigat assiduè cælum candore recenti,
Suppeditàtque novo confestim lumine lumen.

LUCR., v., 281.

[1] *Boy*, *i. e.*, valet. Montaigne never had a son.

[2] The brackets here take the place of a very coarse French word, no longer in use, which F. did not dare to translate.

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Heav'n's sun the plenteous spring of liquid light
Still heav'n bedews with splendour fresh and bright,
Still light supplies with light of fresher sight.

So doth our mind cast her points diversely and imperceptibly.

Artabanus surprised Xerxes his nephew, and chided him for the sudden changing of his countenance. He was to consider the unmeasurable greatness of his forces at the passage of Hellespont, for the enterprise of Greece. First he was suddenly assailed by an excessive joy, to see so many thousands of men at his service, and witnessed the same by the alacrity and cheerfulness of his countenance: and immediately at the very moment, his thoughts suggesting how so many lives were to be consumed and should come to nothing (at the farthest, within one age) he began to frown his brows, and grew so pensive, that he wept.

We have with a resolute and inexorable mind pursued the revenge of an injury, and felt a singular content for the victory; yet upon better advice do we weep: it is not that we weep for: the thing is as it was, there is nothing changed; but that our mind beholds the thing with another eye, and under another shape it presents itself unto us. For everything hath divers faces, sundry biases, and several lustres.

Alliance, kindred, old acquaintances, and long friendship seize on our imagination, and at that instant passionate the same according to their quality, but the turn or change of it, is so violent that it escapes us,

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Nil adeo fieri celeri ratione videtur,
Quàm si mens fieri proponit et inchoat ipsa.
Ocius ergo animus quàm res se perciet ulla,
Ante oculos quarum in promptu natura videtur;
L., iii., 183.

Nothing in so quick sort seems to be done,
As mind set on a thing, and once begun,
The mind that swifter stirs before our eyes,
Than anything, whose form we soon comprise;

and therefore, intending to continue one body of all this pursuit, we deceive ourselves. When Timoleon [1] weepeth the murder he hath perpetrated with so mature and generous a determination, he weepeth not for the liberty restored to his country, nor the tyrant, but he weepeth for his brother. One part of his duty is acted, let us permit him to play the other.

[1] One of the purest of Greek heroes, whose life was written by Plutarch. He killed his own brother, rather than allow him to make himself tyrant over Corinth, their native city. He was born in 410 and died in 337 B.C.

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CHAPTER XVIII

OF SOLITARINESS

LET us leave apart this outworn comparison, between a solitary and an active life. And touching that goodly saying under which ambition and avarice shroud themselves, that we are not born for our particular, but for the public good, let us boldly refer ourselves to those that are engaged, and let them beat their conscience, if on the contrary, the states, the charges, and this trash of the world, are not rather sought and sued for to draw a private commodity from the public. The bad and indirect means wherethrough in our age men canvass and toil to attain the same, do manifestly declare the end thereof to be of no great consequence. Let us answer ambition that herself gives us the taste of solitariness. For what doth she shun so much as company? What seeketh she more than elbow-room? There is no place, but there are means and ways to do well or ill. Nevertheless if the saying of Bias[1] be true; "that the worst part is the greatest"; or that which Ecclesiastes saith, "that of a thousand there is not one good";

> *Rari quippe boni, numero vix sunt totidem, quot*
> *Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili:*
>
> JUVE., *Sat.*, xiii., 26.

[1] One of the seven wise men of Greece; lived in the sixth century B.C.

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Good men are rare, so many scarce (I fear)
As gates of Thebes, mouths of rich Nilus were:

contagion is very dangerous in a throng. A man must imitate the vicious, or hate them: both are dangerous: for to resemble them is perilous, because they are many, and to hate many is hazardous, because they are dissemblable, and merchants that travel by sea have reason to take heed that those which go in the same ship be not dissolute, blasphemers, and wicked, judging such company unfortunate. Therefore Bias said pleasantly to those that together with him passed the danger of a great storm, and called to the gods for help: "Peace, my masters, lest they should hear that you are here with me." And of a more military [1] example, Albuquerque,[2] Viceroy in India for Emanuel [3] King of Portugal, in an extreme danger of a sea-tempest, took a young boy upon his shoulders, for this only end, that in the common peril his innocence might be his warrant, and recommending to God's favour, to set him on shore: yet may a wise man live everywhere contented, yea and alone, in the throng of a palace: but if he may choose, he will (saith he) "avoid the sight of it." If need require, he will endure the first: but if he may have his choice, he will choose the latter. He thinks he hath not sufficiently rid himself from vices, if he must also contest with other men's faults. Charondas [4] punished

[1] *Military*.—Substitute "striking."

[2] Albuquerque, born 1453, died 1515, the greatest of the Portuguese conquerors in India.

[3] Manoel, or Emmanuel, King of Portugal, 1495–1521.

[4] Greek lawmaker, lived in sixth century B.C.

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those for wicked, that were convicted to have frequented lewd companies. There is nothing so dissociable and sociable as man, the one for his vice, the other for his nature. And I think Antisthenes[1] did not satisfy him that upbraided him with his conversation with the wicked, saying, "That physicians live amongst the sick." Who if they stead sick men's healths, they impair their own, by the infection, continual visiting, touching and frequenting of diseases.

Now (as I suppose) the end is both one, thereby to live more at leisure, and better at ease. But man doth not always seek the best way to come unto it, who often supposeth to have quit affairs, when he hath but changed them. There is not much less vexation in the government of a private family than in the managing of an entire state: wheresoever the mind is busied, there it is all; and though domestic occupations be less important, they are as importunate. Moreover, though we have freed ourselves from the court, and from the market, we are not free from the principal torments of our life.

> *ratio et prudentia curas,*
> *Non locus effusi latè maris arbiter aufert.*
> HOR., i., *Epist.*, xi., 25.
>
> Reason and wisdom may set cares aside,
> Not place the arbiter of seas so wide.

Shift we, or change we places never so often, ambition, avarice, irresolution, fear, and concupiscences never leave us.

[1] Founder of the sect of Cynics, at a time a disciple of Socrates; lived in fifth and fourth centuries B.C.

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Et post equitem sedet atra cura.—HOR., iii., *Od.* i., 39.

Care looking grim and black, doth sit
Behind his back that rides from it.

They often follow us, even into immured cloisters, and into schools of philosophy; nor do hollow rocks, nor wearing of hair-shirts, nor continual fastings rid us from them.

Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.—VIRG., *Æn.*, iv., 73.

The shaft that death implied
Sticks by the flying side.

It was told Socrates, that one was no whit amended by his travel: "I believe it well," said he, "for he carried himself with him."

Quid terras alio calentes
Sole mutamus? patriâ quis exul
Se quoque fugit?
HOR., ii., *Od.* xvi., 18.

Why change we soils warm'd with another sun,
Who from home banished hath himself outrun?

If a man do not first discharge both himself and his mind from the burthen that presseth her,[1] removing from place to place will stir and press her the more; as in a ship, wares well stowed, and closely piled, take up least room, you do a sick man more hurt than good, to make him change place, you settle an evil in removing the same; as stakes or poles, the more they are stirred and shaken, the faster they stick, and sink deeper into the ground. Therefore is it not enough, for a man to have

[1] *Her, i. e.*, his mind.

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sequestered himself from the concourse of people; it is not sufficient to shift place, a man must also sever himself from the popular conditions that are in us. A man must sequester and recover himself from himself.

rupi jam vincula, dicas,
Nam luctata canis nodum arripit, attamen illa
Cùm fugit, à collo trahitur pars longa catenæ.
PERS., *Sat.*, v., 158.

You will say haply I my bonds have quit,
Why so the striving dog the knot hath bit;
Yet when he flies, much chain doth follow it.

We carry our fetters with us: it is not an absolute liberty; we still cast back our looks towards that we have left behind: our mind doth still run on it; our fancy is full of it.

Nisi purgatum est pectus, quæ prælia nobis
Atque pericula tunc ingratis insinuandum?
Quantæ conscindunt hominem cupidinis acres
Sollicitum curæ, quantique perinde timores?
Quidve superbia, spurcitia, ac petulantia, quantas
Efficiunt clades, quid luxus desidiesque?
LUCR., v., 44.

Unless our breast be purg'd, what wars must we,
What perils then, though much displeased, see?
How great fears, how great cares of sharp desire
Do careful man distract, torment, enfire?
Uncleanness, wantonness, sloth, riot, pride,
How great calamities have these implied?

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Our evil is rooted in our mind: and it cannot escape from itself;

In culpa est animus, qui se non effugit unquam;
HOR., i., *Epist.*, xiv., 13.

The mind in greatest fault must lie,
Which from itself can never fly;

therefore must it be reduced and brought into itself: it is the true solitariness, and which may be enjoyed even in the frequency of peopled cities, and king's courts: but it is more commodiously enjoyed apart. Now since we undertake to live solitary, and without company, let us cause our contentment to depend of ourselves: let us shake off all bonds that tie us unto others: gain we that victory over us, that in good earnest we may live solitary, and therein live at our ease.

Stilpon[1] having escaped the combustion of his city, wherein he had lost both wife and children, and all his goods, Demetrius Poliorcetes seeing him in so great a ruin of his country, with an unaffrighted countenance, demanded of him, whether he had received any loss. He answered, No: and that (thanks given to God) he had lost nothing of his own. It is that which Antisthenes the Philosopher said very pleasantly, that man ought to provide himself with munitions that might float upon the water, and by swimming escape the danger of shipwreck with him. Verily, a man of understanding hath lost nothing, if he yet have himself.

[1] Greek philosopher, born in Megara about 350 B.C. The event referred to happened in 306, when Demetrius Poliorcetes, in the sack of Megara, which he had taken, ordered Stilpon's house to be spared.

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When the city of Nola[1] was overrun by the barbarians, Paulinus,[2] bishop thereof, having lost all he had there, and being their prisoner, prayed thus unto God: "Oh Lord deliver me from feeling of this loss: for thou knowest as yet they have touched nothing that is mine." The riches that made him rich, and the goods which made him good, were yet absolutely whole. Behold what it is to choose treasures well, that may be freed from injury, and to hide them in a place where no man may enter, and which cannot be betrayed but by ourselves. A man that is able, may have wives, children, goods, and chiefly health, but not so tie himself unto them that his felicity depend on them. We should reserve a storehouse for ourselves, what need soever chance; altogether ours, and wholly free, wherein we may hoard up and establish our true liberty, and principal retreat and solitariness, wherein we must go alone to ourselves, take our ordinary entertainment, and so privately, that no acquaintance or communication of any strange thing may therein find place, there to discourse, to meditate and laugh, as, without wife, without children, and goods, without train, or servants; that if by any occasion they be lost, it seem not strange to us to pass it over[3]; we have a mind moving and turning in itself; it may keep itself company; it hath wherewith to offend and defend, wherewith to receive, and wherewith to give. Let us not fear that we shall faint and droop through tedious and mind-trying idleness in this solitariness.

[1] Small city in Italy, about fourteen miles from Naples.

[2] Paulinus, or Saint Paulinus, born in 353, bishop of Nola, 409–431.

[3] *Pass it over.*—"do without them."

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In solis sis tibi turba locis.
Be thou, when with thee is not any,
As good unto thyself as many.

Virtue is contented with itself, without discipline, without words, and without effects. In our accustomed actions, of a thousand there is not one found that regards us: he whom thou seest so furiously, and as it were beside himself, to clamber or crawl up the city walls, or breach, as a point-blank to a whole volley of shot, and another all wounded and scarred, crazed and faint, and well-nigh hunger-starved, resolved rather to die, than to open his enemy the gate, and give him entrance, dost thou think he is there for himself? No, verily; it is peradventure for such a one, whom neither he, nor so many of his fellows ever saw, and who haply takes no care at all for them; but is therewhilst wallowing up to the ears in sensuality, sloth, and all manner of carnal delights. This man whom about midnight, when others take their rest, thou seest come out of his study meagre-looking, with eyes trilling, phlegmatic, squalid, and spauling, dost thou think, that plodding on his books he doth seek how he shall become an honester man, or more wise, or more content? There is no such matter. He will either die in his pursuit, or teach posterity the measure of Plautus's verses, and the true orthography of a Latin word. Who doth not willingly chop and counter-change his health, his ease, yea, and his life for glory, and for reputation? The most unprofitable, vain, and counterfeit coin, that is in use with us. Our death is not sufficient to make us afraid;

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let us also charge ourselves with that of our wives. of our children, and of our friends, and people. Our own affairs do not sufficiently trouble and vex us; let us also drudge, toil, vex, and torment ourselves with our neighbours' and friends' matters.

Vah! quemquámne hominem in animum instituere, aut Parare, quod sit charius, quàm ipse est sibi?

TER., *Adel.*, Act I., scen. i., 13.

Fie, that a man should cast, that ought, than he
Himself of himself, more belov'd should be.

Solitariness, meseemeth, hath more appearance and reason in those which have given their most active and flourishing age unto the world, in imitation of Thales. We have lived long enough for others, live we the remainder of our life unto ourselves: let us bring home our cogitations and inventions unto ourselves, and unto our ease. It is no easy matter to make a safe retreat: it doth overmuch trouble us without joining other enterprises unto it. Since God gives us leisure to dispose of our dislodging, let us prepare ourselves unto it, pack we up our baggage. Let us betimes bid our company farewell. Shake we off these violent holdfasts, which elsewhere engage us, and estrange us from ourselves.

These so strong bonds must be untied, and a man may eftsoon love this or that, but wed nothing but himself; that is to say, let the rest be our own: yet not so combined and glued together that it may not be sundered without fleeing us, and therewithal pull away some piece of our own. The greatest thing of the world is for a man to know how to be

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his own. It is high time to shake off society, since we can bring nothing to it. And he that cannot lend, let him take heed of borrowing. Our forces fail us: retire we them, and shut them up into ourselves. He that can suppress and confound in himself the offices of so many amities, and of the company, let him do it. In this fall, which makes us inutile, irksome, and importunate to others, let him take heed he be not importunate, irksome, and unprofitable to himself. Let him flatter, court, and cherish himself, and above all let him govern himself, respecting his reason and fearing his conscience, so that he may not without shame stumble or trip in their presence. "Rarum est enim, ut satis se quisque vereatur": "For it is a rare matter, that every man sufficiently should stand in awe and reverence of himself." Socrates saith, that young men ought to be instructed, and men exercised in well doing; and old men withdraw themselves from all civil and military negotiations, living at their own discretion, without obligation to any certain office. There are some complexions, more proper for these precepts of retreat than others. Those which have a tender and demiss apprehension, a squeamish affection, a delicate will, and which cannot easily subject or employ itself (of which both by natural condition and propense discourse I am one) will better apply themselves unto this counsel than active minds, and busy spirits, which embrace all, everywhere engage, and in all things passionate themselves, that offer, that present, and yield themselves to all occasions. A man must make use of all these accidental commodities, and which are without us,

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so long as they be pleasing to us; but not make them our principal foundation: it is not so, nor reason, nor nature permit it. Why should we against their laws subject our contentment to the power of others? Moreover, to anticipate the accidents of fortune, for a man to deprive himself of the commodities he hath in possession, as many have done for devotion, and some philosophers by discourse, to serve themselves, to lie upon the hard ground, to pull out their own eyes, to cast their riches into the sea, to seek for pain and smart (some by tormenting this life, for the happiness of another, othersome placing themselves on the lowest step, thereby to warrant themselves from a new fall) is the action of an excessive virtue. Let sterner and more vigorous complexions make their lurking glorious and more exemplar:

tuta et parvula laudo,
Cùm res deficiunt, satis inter vilia fortis:
Verùm ubi quid melius contingit et unctius, idem
Hos sapere, et solos aio bene vivere, quorum
Conspicitur nitidis fundata pecunia villis:
HOR., i., *Epist.*, xv., 42.

When riches fail, I praise the safe estate,
Though small; base things do not high thoughts abate.
But when 't is better, finer with me, I
They only live well, and are wise, do cry,
Whose coin in fair farms doth well-grounded lie:

there is work enough for me to do without going so far. It sufficeth me under fortune's favour, to prepare myself for her disfavour; and being at ease, as far as imagination may attain unto, to represent the

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evil to come unto myself, even as we inure ourselves to tilts and tourneys, and counterfeit war in time of peace. I esteem not Arcesilaus[1] the philosopher less reformed, because I know him to have used household implements of gold and silver, according as the condition of his fortune gave him leave. I rather value him the more, than if he had not done it, forsomuch as he both moderately and liberally made use of them. I know unto what limits natural necessity goeth; and I consider the poor almsman begging at my door, to be often more plump-cheeked, in better health and liking than I am: then do I enter into his estate, and assay to frame and suit my mind unto his bias. And so overrunning other examples, albeit I imagine death, poverty, contempt, and sickness to be at my heels, I easily resolve myself not to apprehend any fear of that, which one of less worth than myself doth tolerate and undergo with such patience: and I cannot believe that the baseness or shallowness of understanding can do more than vigour and far-seeing, or that the effects and reason of discretion cannot reach to the effects of custom and use. And knowing what slender holdfast these accessory commodities have, I omit not in full jouissance of them, humbly to beseech God of his mercy (as a sovereign request) to make me contented with myself, and with the goods proceeding from me. I see some gallantly disposed young men, who, notwithstanding their fair-seeming shew, have many boxes full of pills in their coffers at home, to take when the rheum shall assail them; which so much the less

[1] Founder of the second Academy, lived in the third century B.C.

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they fear, when they think the remedy to be at hand. So must a man do: as also if he feel himself subject to some greater infirmity, to store himself with medicaments that may assuage, supple, and stupefy the part grieved.

The occupation a man should choose for such a life, must neither be painful nor tedious, otherwise, in vain should we account to have sought our abiding there, which depends from the particular taste of every man. Mine doth no way accommmodate itself to husbandry. Those that love it must with moderation apply themselves unto it.

Conentur sibi res, non se submittere rebus:
HOR., *Epist.*, i., 19.

Endeavour they things to them to submit,
Not them to things (if they have Horace's wit)

husbandry is otherwise a servile office, as Sallust termeth it: it hath more excusable parts, as the care of gardening, which Xenophon ascribeth to Cyrus: a mean or mediocrity may be found, between this base and vile carking care, extended and full of toiling labour, which we see in men that wholly plunge themselves therein, and that profound and extreme recklessness to let all things go at sixes and sevens, which is seen in others.

Democriti pecus edit agellos
Cultaque, dum peregrè est animus sine corpore velox.
HOR., *Epist.*, xii., 12.

Cattle destroyed Democritus his sets,
While his mind bodiless vagaries fets.

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But let us hear the counsel which Pliny the Younger giveth to his friend Cornelius Rufus, touching this point of solitariness: "I persuade thee in this full-gorged and fat retreat, wherein thou art, to remit this base and abject care of husbandry unto thy servants, and give thyself to the study of letters, whence thou mayest gather something, that may altogether be thine own." He meaneth reputation: like unto Cicero's humour, who saith that he will employ his solitariness and residence from public affairs, to purchase unto himself by his writings an immortal life.

Usque adeone
Scire tuum nihil est, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter?
PERS., *Sat.*, i., 27.

Is it then nothing worth that thou dost know,
Unless what thou dost know, thou others show?

It seemeth to be reason, when a man speaketh to withdraw himself from the world, that one should look beyond him.[1] These do it but by halves. Indeed they set their match against the time they shall be no more, but pretend to reap the fruit of their designs, when they shall be absent from the world, by a ridiculous contradiction.

The imagination of those, who through devotion seek solitariness, filling their minds with the certainty of heavenly promises in the other life, is much more soundly consorted. They propose God as an object infinite in goodness, and incomprehensible in power, unto themselves. The soul hath

[1] *Him.*—Substitute "it."

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therein, in all free liberty, wherewith to glut herself. Afflictions and sorrows redound to their profit, being employed for the purchase and attaining of health, and eternal gladness. Death, according to one's wish, is a passage to so perfect an estate. The sharpness of their rules is presently made smooth and easy by custom; and carnal concupiscences rejected, abated, and lulled asleep by refusing them; for nothing entertaineth them but use and exercise. This only end of another life, blessedly immortal, doth rightly merit we should abandon the pleasures and commodities of this our life. And he that can enlighten his soul with the flame of a lively faith and hope, really and constantly, in his solitariness, doth build unto himself a voluptuous and delicious life, for surmounting all other lives.

Therefore doth neither the end nor middle of this counsel please me. We are ever falling into a relapse, from an ague to a burning fever. This plodding occupation of books, is as painful as any other, and as great an enemy unto health, which ought principally to be considered. And a man should not suffer himself to be inveigled by the pleasure he takes in them: it is the same pleasure, that loseth the thriving husbandman, the greedy-covetous, the sinning-voluptuous, and the puffed-up ambitious. The wisest men teach us sufficiently to beware and shield us from the treasons of our appetites, and to discern true and perfect pleasures, from delights blended and intermingled with more pain. For most pleasures (say they) tickle, fawn upon, and embrace us, with purpose to strangle us, as did the thieves whom the Egyptians termed Philistas: and

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if the headache would seize upon us before drunkenness, we would then beware of too much drinking; but sensuality, the better to entrap us, marcheth before, and hideth her track from us. Books are delightful; but if by continual frequenting them, we in the end lose both health and cheerfulness (our best parts) let us leave them. I am one of those who think their fruit can no way countervail this loss. As men that have long time felt themselves enfeebled through some indisposition do in the end yield to the mercy of physic, and by art have certain rules of life prescribed them which they will not transgress, so he that withdraws himself, as distasted and over tired with the common life, ought likewise to frame and prescribe this unto the rules of reason, direct and range the same by premeditation and discourse. He must bid all manner of travel farewell, what shew soever it bear; and in general shun all passions that any way impeach the tranquillity of mind and body, and follow the course best agreeing with his humour.

Unusquisque sua noverit ire via.
PROPERT., ii., *El.*, xxv., 38.

His own way every man
Tread-out directly can.

A man must give to thriving husbandry, to laborious study, to toilsome hunting, and to every other exercise, the utmost bounds of pleasure; and beware he engage himself no further, if once pain begin to intermeddle itself with her[1]; we should reserve business and negotiations only for so much as is be-

[1] *Her, i. e.*, pleasure.

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hooveful to keep us in breath, and to warrant us from the inconveniences which the other extremity of a base, faint-hearted idleness draws after it. There are certain barren and thorny sciences, which for the most part are forged for the multitude: they should be left for those, who are for the service of the world. As for myself, I love no books but such as are pleasant and easy, and which tickle me, or such as comfort and counsel me, to direct my life and death.

Tacitum sylvas inter reptare salubres
Curantem quidquid dignum sapiente bonoque est.
HOR. i., *Epist.*, iv., 4.

Silently creeping midst the wholesome wood
With care what 's for a wise man and a good.

The wiser sort of men, having a strong and vigorous mind, may frame unto themselves an altogether spiritual life. But mine being common, I must help to uphold myself by corporal commodities: and age having eftsoon despoiled me of those that were most suitable to my fantasy, I instruct and sharpen my appetite to those remaining most sortable this other season. We must tooth and nail retain the use of this life's pleasures, which our years snatch from us, one after another:

Carpamus dulcia, nostrum est,
Quòd vivis: cinis et manes et fabula fies.
PERS., *Sat.*, v., 155.

Pluck we sweet pleasures: we thy life give thee.
Thou shalt a tale, a ghost, and ashes be.

Now concerning the end of glory, which Pliny and Cicero propose unto us, it is far from my discourse:

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the most opposite humour to solitary retiring, is ambition. "Glory and rest, are things that cannot squat in one same form": as far as I see, these have nought but their arms and legs out of the throng; their mind and intent is further and more engaged in them than ever it was.

> *Tun' vetule auriculis alienis colligis escas?*
>
> PERS., *Sat.*, i., 22.
>
> Gatherst thou dotard at these years,
> Fresh baits, fine food, for others' ears?

They have gone back that they might leap the better, and with a stronger motion make a nimbler offer amidst the multitude. Will you see how they shoot short by a corn's breadth? let us but counterpoise the advice of two philosophers,[1] and of two most different sects: the one writing to Idomeneus, the other to Lucilius their friends, to divert them from the managing of affairs and greatness, unto a solitary kind of life. "You have," say they, "lived hitherto swimming and floating adrift, come and die in the haven. You have given the past of your life unto light, give the remainder unto darkness. It is impossible to give over occupations, if you do not also give over the fruits of them: therefore clear yourself from all care and glory. There is great danger, lest the glittering of your forepast actions should over-much dazzle you, yea, and follow you even to your den. Together with other concupiscences, shake off that which cometh from the approbation of others. And touching your knowledge and sufficiency, take you no care of them, they will

[1] Epicurus and Seneca.

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lose no whit of their effect; if yourself be anything the better for them. Remember but him, who being demanded, to what purpose he toiled so much about an art which could by no means come to the knowledge of many," "Few are enough for me; one will suffice, yea, less than one will content me," answered he. He said true: you and another are a sufficient theatre one for another, or you to yourself alone. Let the people be one unto you, and one be all the people to you: it is a base ambition to go about to draw glory from one's idleness, and from one's lurking hole. A man must do as some wild beasts, which at the entrance of their caves will have no manner of footing seen. You must no longer seek what the world saith of you, but how you must speak unto yourself: withdraw yourself into yourself; but first prepare yourself to receive yourself: it were folly to trust to yourself, if you cannot govern yourself. A man may as well fail in solitariness as in company, there are ways for it, until such time as you have framed yourself such, that you dare not halt before yourself, and that you may be ashamed of, and bear a kind of respect unto yourself, "Obversentur species honestæ animo" (CIC., *Tusc. Qu.*, ii.): "Let honest ideas still represent themselves before your mind." Ever present Cato, Phocion, and Aristides unto your imagination, in whose presence even fools would hide their faults, and establish them as controllers of all your intentions. If they be disordered and untuned, their reverence will order and tune them again: they will contain you in a way, to be contented with yourself, to borrow nothing but from yourself, to settle and stay your

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mind in assured and limited cogitations, wherein it may best please itself, and having gotten knowledge of true felicities, which according to the measure a man understands them he shall accordingly enjoy, and with them rest satisfied, without wishing a further continuance, either of life or name." Lo, hear the counsel of truly-pure and purely-true philosophy,[1] not of a vainglorious, boasting, and prating philosophy, as is that of the two first.

[1] *Truly pure and purely true.*—F. and not Montaigne is responsible for this juggling with words. The French author merely wrote "la vraie et naïve philosophie."

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CHAPTER XIX

THAT THE TASTE OF GOODS OR EVILS DOTH GREATLY DEPEND ON THE OPINION WE HAVE OF THEM

"MEN," saith an ancient Greek sentence, "are tormented by the opinions they have of things, and not by things themselves." It were a great conquest for the ease of our miserable human condition, if any man could establish everywhere this true proposition. For if evils have no entrance into us but by our judgment, it seemeth that it lieth in our power either to contemn or turn them to our good. If things yield themselves unto our mercy, why should we not have the fruition of them, or apply them to our advantage? If that which we call evil and torment be neither torment nor evil, but that our fancy only gives it that quality, it is in us to change it: and having the choice of it, if none compel us, we are very fools to bandy for that party which is irksome unto us, and to give infirmities, indigence, and contempt a sharp and ill taste if we may give them a good: and if fortune simply afford us the matter, it lieth in us to give it the form. Now that that which we term evil is not so of itself, or at least, such as it is, that it depends of us to give it

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another taste and another countenance (for all comes to one) let us see whether it can be maintained.

If the original being of those things we fear had the credit of its own authority to lodge itself in us, alike and semblable would it lodge in all: for men be all of one kind, and except the most or least,[1] they are furnished with like means to judge, and instruments to conceive. But the diversity of opinions which we have of those things doth evidently show that but by composition they never enter into us. Some one peradventure doth lodge them in himself as they are in essence, but a thousand others give them a new being, and a contrary. We account of death, of poverty, and of sorrow, as of our chiefest parts.[2] Now death, which some of all horrible things call the most horrible, who knows not how others call it, the only haven of this life's torments? the sovereign good of nature? the only stay of our liberty? and the ready and common receipt of our evils? And as some do fearfully-trembling and senselessly-affrighted expect her coming, others endure it more easily than life: and one complaineth of her facility:

> *Mors utinam pavidos vitæ subducere nolles,*
> *Sed virtus te sola daret!*—LUCAN., iv., 580.
>
> O death! I would thou wouldst let cowards live,
> That resolv'd valour might thee only give!

But let us leave these glorious minds. Theodorus answered Lysimachus, who threatened to kill him: "Thou shalt do a great exploit to come to the

[1] Substitute "and more or less."

[2] *Parts*, *i. e.*, enemies.

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strength of a cantharides." The greatest number of philosophers are found to have either by design prevented,[1] or hastened and furthered their deaths. How many popular persons are seen brought unto death, and not to a simple death, but intermixed with shame, and sometimes with grievous torments, to embrace it with such an undaunted assurance; some through stubborn wilfulness, other some through a natural simplicity, in whom is nothing seen changed from their ordinary condition; settling their domestical affairs, recommending themselves unto their friends, preaching, singing, and entertaining the people: yea, and sometimes uttering words of jesting and laughter, and drinking to their acquaintance, as well as Socrates!

One who was led to the gallows desired it might not be through such a street, for fear a merchant should set a sergeant on his back, for an old debt. Another wished the hangman not to touch his throat, lest he should make him swoon with laughing, because he was so ticklish. Another answered his confessor, who promised him he should sup that night with our Saviour in heaven: "Go thither yourself to supper, for I use to fast a nights." Another upon the gibbet calling for drink, and the hangman drinking first, said, he would not drink after him, for fear he should take the pox of him. Every man hath heard the tale of the Picard, who being upon the ladder ready to be thrown down, there was a wench presented unto him, with this offer (as in some cases our law doth sometimes tolerate) that if he would marry her, his life should be saved, who

[1] *Prevented*, *i. e.*, met in advance.

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after he had a while beheld her, and perceiving that she halted, said hastily: "Away, away, good hangman, make an end of thy business, she limps." The like is reported of a man of Denmark, who being adjudged to have his head cut off, and being upon the scaffold, had the like condition offered him, but refused it, because the wench offered him was jaw-fallen, long-cheeked, and sharp-nosed. A young lad at Toulouse, being accused of heresy, in all points touching his belief, referred himself wholly to his master's faith (a fair young scholar that was in prison with him) and rather chose to die, than he would be persuaded his master could err. We read of those of the town of Arras, at what time King Lewis XI. took it, that amongst the common people many were found, who rather than they would say, "God save the King," suffered themselves to be hanged. And of those base-minded jesters or buffoons some have been seen, that even at the point of death, would never leave their jesting and scoffing. He whom the headsman threw off from the gallows, cried out, "Row the Galley," which was his ordinary byword. Another, who being at his last gasp, his friends had laid him upon a pallet along the fireside, there to breathe his last, the physician demanding where his grief pained him, answered, "Between the bench and the fire"; and the priest to give him the last unction, seeking for his feet, which by reason of his sickness were shrunken up, he told him: "My good friend, you shall find them at my legs' ends, if you look well." To another that exhorted him to recommend himself to God, he asked, "Who is going to him?"

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And the fellow answering, "Yourself shortly." "If it be his good pleasure, I would to God it might be to-morrow night," replied he. "Recommend but yourself to him," said the other, "and you shall quickly be there." "It is best then," answered he, "that myself carry mine own commendations to him."

In the kingdom of Narsinga, even at this day their priests' wives are buried alive with the bodies of their dead husbands. All other wives are burnt at their husbands' funerals, not only constantly, but cheerfully. When their King dieth, his wives, his concubines, his minions, together with all his officers and servants, which make a whole people, present themselves so merrily unto the fire, wherein his body is burned, that they manifestly seem to esteem it as a great honour, to accompany their deceased master to his ashes. During our last wars of Milan, and so many takings, losses, miseries, and calamities of that city, the people, impatient of so many changes of fortune, took such a resolution unto death, that I have heard my father say he kept account of five-and-twenty chief householders, that in one week made themselves away: an accident which hath some affinity with that of the Xanthians, who being besieged by Brutus, did pell-mell-headlong, men, women, and children precipitate themselves into so furious a desire of death that nothing can be performed to avoid death, which these did not accomplish to avoid life: so that Brutus had much ado to save a very small number of them.

Every opinion is of sufficient power to take hold of a man in respect of life. The first article of that courageous oath, which the country of Greece did

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swear, and keep, in the Median war, was, that every particular man should rather change his life unto death, than the Persian laws for theirs. What a world of people are daily seen in the Turkish wars, and the Grecians, more willing to embrace a sharp, a bitter, and violent death, than to be uncircumcised and baptised? an example whereof no religion is incapable.

The kings of Castile having banished the Jews out of their country, King John of Portugal for eight crowns a man, sold them a retreat in his dominions, for a certain time, upon condition (the time expired) they should avoid, and he find them ships to transport them into Africa. The day of their departure come, which past, it was expressed, that such as had not obeyed should for ever remain bond-slaves. Ships were provided them, but very scarce and sparingly: and those which were embarked were so rudely, churlishly, and villainously used, by the passengers and mariners, who besides infinite other indignities, loitered so long on the seas, now forward, now backward, that in the end they had consumed all their victuals, and were forced, if they would keep themselves alive, to purchase some of them, at so excessive a rate, and so long, that they were never set ashore, till they had brought them so bare, that they had nothing left them but their shirts. The news of this barbarous inhumanity being reported to those that were yet on land, most of them resolved to yield and continue bond-slaves: whereof some made a semblance to change their religion. Emanuel that immediately succeeded John, being come to the crown, first set them at liberty, then

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changing his mind, commanded them to depart out of his dominions, and for their passages assigned them three ports. He hoped, as Bishop Osorius[1] reporteth (a Latin historian of our ages, not to be despised) that the favour of the liberty, to which he had restored them, having failed to convert them unto Christianity, the difficulty to commit themselves unto mariners and pirates' robberies, to leave a country where they were settled with great riches, for to go seek unknown and strange regions, would bring them into Portugal again. But seeing all his hopes frustrate, and that they purposed to pass away, he cut off two of the three ports he had promised them, that so the tedious distance and incommodity of the passage might retain some, or rather that he might have the means to assemble them all together in one place, for a fitter opportunity of the execution he intended, which was this. He appointed that all their children under fourteen years of age should be taken from out the hands of their parents, and removed from their sight and conversation, to some place where they might be brought up, and instructed in our religion. He saith that this effect caused an horrible spectacle: the natural affection between the fathers and the children, moreover the zeal unto their ancient faith, striving against this violent ordinance. Divers fathers and mothers were ordinarily seen to kill themselves, and with a more cruel example through compassion and love, to throw their young children into pits

[1] Osorio, celebrated Portuguese divine and historian, born 1506, died 1580, the very year of the appearance of the first edition of the *Essays*.

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and wells, thereby to shun the law. The term which he had prefixed them being expired, for want of other means they yielded unto thraldom. Some became Christians, from whose faith and race, even at this day (for it is an hundred years since) few Portugals assure themselves; although custom, and length of time be much more forcible counsellors unto such mutations, than any other compulsion.

In the town of Castelnaudary,[1] more than fifty Albigeois, all heretics, at one time, with a determined courage, suffered themselves to be burned alive, all in one same fire, before they would recant and disavow their opinions. "Quoties non modò ductores nostri, sed universi etiam exercitus, ad non dubiam mortem concurrerunt?" (CIC., *Tusc. Qu.*, i.): "How often have not only our leaders (saith Tully) but also our whole armies run roundly together to an undoubted death?" I have seen one of my familiar friends run furiously on death, with such, and so deeply in his heart rooted affection, by divers visages of discourse, which I could never suppress in him, and to the first that offered itself masked with a lustre of honour, without apprehending any sharp or violent end, therein to precipitate himself. We have many examples in our days, yea in very children, of such as for fear of some slight incommodity have yielded unto death. And to this purpose saith an ancient writer, what shall we not fear, if we fear that, which cowardice itself hath chosen for her retreat?

Here to huddle up a long bead-roll of those of all

[1] A small town in the south of France, now in the Department of Aude, not far from Carcassonne.

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sexes, conditions, sects, in most happy ages, which either have expected death most constantly, or sought for it voluntarily, and not only sought to avoid the evils of this life, but some, only to shun the satiety of living any longer, and some, for the hope of a better condition elsewhere, I should never have done. The number is so infinite, that verily it would be an easier matter for me to reckon up those that have feared the same. Only this more. Pirrho the philosopher,[1] finding himself upon a very tempestuous day in a boat, shewed them whom he perceived to be most affrighted through fear, and encouraged them by the example of an hog, that was amongst them, and seemed to take no care at all for the storm: shall we then dare to say, that the advantage of reason, whereat we seem so much to rejoice, and for whose respect we account ourselves lords and emperors of all other creatures, hath been infused into us for our torment? What availeth the knowledge of things, if through them we become more demiss? if thereby we lose the rest and tranquillity wherein we should be without them? and if it makes us of worse condition than was Pirrho's hog? Shall we employ the intelligence heaven hath bestowed upon us for our greatest good to our ruin? repugning nature's design and the universal order and vicissitude of things, which implieth that every man should use his instruments and means for his own commodity?

Well (will some tell me) let your rule fit you against death; but what will you say of indigence

[1] Pyrrho, the most prominent sceptic philosopher of Greece; lived in fourth century B.C.

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and necessity? what will you also say of mind-grieving sorrow,[1] which Aristippus, Hieronymus,[2] and most of the wisest have judged the last evil? and those which denied the same in words, confessed the same in effect? Possidonius[3] being extremely tormented with a sharp and painful sickness, Pompey came to see him, and excused himself he had chosen so unfit an hour to hear him discourse of philosophy: "God forbid" (answered Possidonius) "that ever pain should so far usurp upon me, as to hinder me from discoursing of so worthy a subject." And thereupon began to speak of the contempt of pain. But therewhilst she played her part, and incessantly pinched and urged him; 'gainst whom he exclaimed: "Pain, do what thou list, I shall never be drawn to say that thou art an evil." That saying, which they would make of such consequence, what doth it infer against the contempt of pain? it contends but for the word. And if the pangs thereof move him not therewhilst, why breaks he off his discourse for it? Why thinks he to work a great exploit, not to call it an evil? All doth not consist in imagination. Here we judge of the rest. It is assured learning that here doth play her part, our own senses are judges of it.

Qui nisi sunt veri, ratio quoque falsa sit omnis.
LUCR., iv., 487.

Which senses if they be not true,
All reason 's false, it must ensue.

[1] *Mind-grieving sorrow.*—The French text says simply "pain" (*douleur*).

[2] Hieronymus of Rhodes, philosopher, who lived about 300 B.C.

[3] Possidonius, celebrated Stoic, born about 135, died 49 B.C.

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Shall we make our skin believe the stripes of a whip do tickle it? and persuade our taste, that aloes be wine of Graves? Pirrho's hog is here in our predicament. He is nothing daunted at death, but if you beat him, he will grunt, cry, and torment himself. Shall we force the general law of nature, which in all living creatures under heaven is seen to tremble at pain? The very trees seem to groan at offences. Death is but felt by discourse, because it is the motion of an instant.

Aut fuit, aut veniet, nihil est præsentis in illa.

Death hath come, or it will not miss;
But in nothing present is.

Morsque minus pœnæ, quàm mora mortis habet.
OVID., *Epist. Ariad.*, 82.

Death's pain 's less, roundly acted,
Than when death is protracted.

A thousand beasts, a thousand men, are sooner dead than threatened. Besides, what we principally call fear in death, it is pain's customary forerunner. Nevertheless, if we must give credit to an ancient father, "Malam mortem non facit, nisi quod sequitur mortem" [1]: "Nothing, but what follows death, makes death to be evil." And I might more truly say, that neither that which goeth before, nor that which cometh after, is no appurtenance of death.

We falsely excuse ourselves: and I find by experience, that it is rather the impatience of the imagination of death, that makes us impatient of

[1] *Cf.* Hamlet's Soliloquy.

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the pain, and that we feel it twofold grievous, forasmuch as it threats us to die. But reason accusing our weakness, to fear so sudden a thing, so unavoidable, so insensible, we take this other more excusable pretence. All evils that have no other danger, but of the evil, we count them dangerless. The toothache, the pain of the gout, how grievous soever, because they kill not, who reckoneth them in the number of maladies?

Well, suppose that in death we especially regard the pain: as also poverty hath nothing to be feared for, but what she casteth upon us through famine, thirst, cold, heat, and other miseries it makes us feel and endure. So have we nothing to do but with pain. I will willingly grant them, that it is the worst accident of our being. For, I am the man that hate and shun it as much as possible may be; because hitherto (thanks be unto God) I have no commerce or dealing with her.[1] But it is in our power, if not to disannul, at least to diminish the same, through patience: and though the body should be moved thereat, yet to keep the mind and reason in good temper. And if it were not so, who then hath brought virtue, valour, force, magnanimity, and resolution into credit? Where shall they play their part, if there be no more pain defied? "Avida est periculi virtus" (SEN., *Quar. Von.*, cap. iv.): "Virtue is desirous of danger." If a man must not lie on the hard gr[illegible] armed at all assays, to endure the heat of the scorching sun, to feed hungerly upon a horse, or an ass, to see himself mangled and cut in pieces, to have a bullet plucked out of his

[1] Later Montaigue was sorely afflicted with calculi in the bladder.

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bones, to suffer incisions, his flesh to be stitched up, cauterised, and searched, all incident to a martial man[1]; how shall we purchase the advantage and pre-eminence, which we so greedily seek after, over the vulgar sort? It is far from avoiding the evil and pains of it, as wise men say, that of actions equally good, one should most be wished to be done, wherein is most pain and grief. "Non enim hilaritate nec lascivia nec risu aut joco comite levitatis, sed sæpe etiam tristes firmitate et constantia sunt beati" (CIC., *De Fin.*, ii.): "For men are not happy by mirthfulness, or wantonness, or laughing, or jesting, which is the companion of lightness; but often, even those that are sorrowful, through their strong heart and constancy." And therefore was it impossible to persuade our fathers that conquests achieved by main force, in the hazard of war, were not more available and advantageous than those obtained in all security by practices and stratagems.

Lætius est, quoties magno sibi constat honestum.
LUCA., ix., 404.

Honesty makes chiefest cheer,
When it doth cost itself most dear.

Moreover, this ought to comfort us, that naturally, if pain be violent, it is also short; if long, it is easy: "Si gravis, brevis; si longus, levis" (CIC., *De Fin.*, ii., Epic.): "If it be grievc is short; if it be long, it is light." Thou shalt not feel it over long; if thou feel it over much, it will either end itself, or end thee. All comes to one: if thou bear not it, it

[1] *All incident to a martial man.*—Addition to the text.

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will bear thee away. "Memineris maximos morte finiri, parvos multa habere intervalla requietis; mediocrium nos esse dominos: ut si tolerabiles sint, feramus: sin minus, è vita, quum ea non placeat, tanquàm è theatro exeamus" (*Ibid.*): "Remember the greatest are ended with death, the lesser have many pauses of rest; we are masters of the mean ones: so as if they be tolerable, we may bear them; if not, we may make an exit from our life which doth not please, as from a stage." That which makes us endure pain with such impatience, is, that we are not accustomed to take our chief contentment in the soul, and that we do not sufficiently rely on her, who is the only, and sovereign mistress of our condition. The body hath (except the least or most) but one course, and one bias. The soul is variable in all manner of forms, and rangeth to herself, and to her estate, whatsoever it be, the senses of the body, and all other accidents. Therefore must she be studied, enquired, and sought after; and her powerful springs and wards should be roused up. There is neither reason, nor prescription, nor force can avail against her inclination and choice. Of so infinite biases that she hath in her disposition, let us allow her one suitable and fit to our rest and preservation: then shall we not only be sheltered from all offence, but if it please her, also gratified and flattered of all grievances and evils. She indifferently makes profit of all; even errors and dreams do profitably bestead her, as a loyal matter, to bring unto safety and contentment. It may easily be seen, that the point of our spirit is that which sharpeneth both pain and pleasure in us.

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Beasts wanting the same, leave their free and natural senses unto their bodies, and by consequence, single well-nigh in every kind, as they shew by the semblable application of their movings. If in our members we did not trouble the jurisdiction, which in that belongs unto them, it may be thought we should be the better for it, and that nature hath given them a just and moderate temperature toward pleasure and toward pain. And it cannot choose but be good and just, being equal and common. But since we have freed and alienated ourselves from her rules, to abandon ourselves unto the vagabond liberty of our fantasies, let us at least help to bend them to the most agreeing side. Plato feareth our sharp engaging unto pain and voluptuousness, forsomuch as he[1] over-strictly tieth and bindeth the soul unto the body: I am rather opposite unto him, because it is sundered and loosed from it. Even as an enemy becometh more furious when we fly from him, so doth pain grow more proud if it see us tremble under it. It will stoop and yield upon better compositions to him that shall make head against it. A man must oppose and bandy against it. In recoiling and giving ground, we call and draw on the ruin threatening us. Even as the body is more steady and strong to a charge, if it stand stiffly to it, so is the soul.

But let us come to examples properly belonging unto weak-backed men, as I am, where we shall find, that it is with pain, as with stones, which take either a higher or deeper colour, according to the foil that is laid under them, and holdeth no other place in us

[1] *He.*—Should be "it."

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than we give it. "Tantum doluerunt, quantum doloribus se inseruerunt" (CIC., *Tusc.*, iii., 28): "So much they grieved, as they interested themselves in griefs." We feel a dash of the chirurgeon's razor more than ten blows with a sword in the heat of fight. The painful throes of child-bearing, deemed both by physicians and by the word of God to be very great, and which our women pass with so many ceremonies, there are whole nations that make no reckoning of them. I omit to speak of the Lacedemonian women; but come we to the Swizzers of our infantry, what change do you perceive in them, but that trudging and trotting after their husbands, to-day you see them carry the child about their neck, which but yesterday they bare in their womb? And those counterfeiting roguing Gyptians, whereof so many are daily seen amongst us, do they not wash their children so soon as they are born? and in the next river that comes to hand? Besides so many harlots which daily steal their children in the delivery as in the conception. The beauteous and noble lady of Sabinus, a Roman patrician, for the interest of others, did alone, without anybody's help or assistance, and without noise or groaning, endure the bearing and delivery of two twins. A simple lad of Lacedemon, having stolen a fox (for they more feared the shame of their foolishness in stealing, than we fear the pain or punishment of misdeeds), and hiding the same under his cloak, endured rather to have his guts gnawed out by her, than to discover himself. Another, who offered incense at a sacrifice, suffered his flesh to burn to the bone by a coal fallen into his sleeve rather than he would

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trouble that sacred mystery. And a great number have been seen, for the only essay of virtue, following their institution, that at the age of seven years, without so much as changing their countenance, have endured to be whipped to death. And Cicero hath seen whole troops to beat one another so long with their fists, with their feet, and with their teeth, till they have fainted and fallen down half dead, before they would confess to be overcome. "Nunquam naturam mos vinceret, est enim ea semper invicta, sed nos umbris, delitiis, otio, languore, desidia, animum infecimus: opinionibus maloque more delinitum mollivimus" (CIC., *Tusc. Quest.*, v.): "Custom should never overcome nature, for she is still invincible: but we have infected our mind with shadows, daintiness, idleness, faint-heartedness, slothfulness, and have effeminated it, inveigled with opinions and evil custom." Every man knows the story of Scævolá, who being entered the enemy's camp, with a full resolution to kill their chieftain, and having missed of his purpose, to check his effect with a stranger invention, and to clear his country, confessed unto Prosenna (who was the King he intended to kill) not only his design, but added, moreover, that in his camp there were a great many Romans who had undertaken and sworn the very same enterprise, and were confederates with him. And to make shew of his dreadless magnanimity, having caused a pan of burning coals to be brought, he saw and suffered his right arm [in[1] penance that it had not effected his project] to be parched and well-nigh roasted off, until such time as his enemy

[1] The bracketed words are F.'s, not Montaigne's.

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himself, feeling a kind of remorseful horror, commanded the fire to be carried away. What shall we say of him, that would not vouchsafe to leave, or so much as to interrupt the reading of his book, whilst he had an incision made into him? And of him who resolved to scoff and laugh, even in spite and contempt of the tortures which were inflicted upon him, so that the raging cruelty of the hangmen that held him, and all the inventions of torments that could be devised, being redoubled upon him, one in the neck of another, gave him over? But he was a philosopher. What of one of Cæsar's gladiators, who with a cheerful and smiling countenance endured his wounds to be slit and sounded? "Quis mediocris gladiator ingemuit? Quis vultum mutavit unquam? Quis non modò stetit, verùm etiam decubuit turpiter? Quis cùm decubuisset, ferrum recipere jussus, collum contraxit?" (CIC., *Tusc. Quest.*, ii.): "What mean fencer hath once groaned? Which of them hath once changed his countenance? Which of them not only hath stood up, but even fallen with shame? Which of them when he was down, and was willed to take his death, did once shrink in his neck?" But let us join some women unto them. Who hath not heard of her at Paris, which only to get a fresher hue of a new skin, endured to have her face flayed all over? There are some, who being sound, and in perfect health, have had some teeth pulled out, thereby to frame a daintier and more pleasing voice, or to set them in better order. How many examples of contempt of pain or smart have we of that kind and sex? What can they not do? What will they not do? What fear they to do? So

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they may but hope for some amendment of their beauty?

Vellere queis cura est albos à stirpe capillos,
Et faciem dempta pelle referre novam.
TIBUL., i., *El.*, viii., 43.

Who take great care to root out their grey hair,
And skin flayed-off a new face to repair.

I have seen some swallow gravel, ashes, coals, dust, tallow, candles,[1] and for the nonce labour and toil themselves to spoil their stomach, only to get a pale-bleak colour. To become slender in waist, and to have a straight spagnolised body, what pinching, what girding, what cingling will they not endure? yea sometimes with iron plates, with whalebones, and other such trash, that their very skin, and quick flesh is eaten in and consumed to the bones; whereby they sometimes work their own death.

It is common to divers nations of our times, to hurt and gash themselves in good earnest, to give credit to their words. And our King[2] reporteth sundry examples of what himself saw in Poland, and towards himself. But besides what I know to have by some been imitated in France, when I came from the famous Parliament of Blois[3]; I had a little

[1] Montaigne says only *du sable et de la cendre.*

[2] *Our King.*—King Henry III., 1574–1589, who several times employed Montaigne in important political negotiations during the civil wars between Protestants and Catholics. Before coming to the French throne, while simply Duke of Anjou, he had been elected King of Poland, and was in Warsaw when he heard of the death of his brother Charles IX.

[3] *Parliament of Blois.*—Relates to the meeting of the States-General in Blois, 1578.

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before seen a wench in Picardy to witness the vehemence of her promises, and also her constancy, with the bodkin she wore in her hair, to give herself four or five thrusts in her arm, which made her skin to crack and gush out blood. The Turks are wont to wound and scar themselves for their ladies' sakes, and that the mark may the better appear, and continue the longer, they will presently lay fire upon the cuts; and to staunch the blood, and better to form the cicatrice, they will keep it on an incredible while. Honest men that have seen it have written the same, and sworn it unto me. And for ten aspers[1] you shall daily find some amongst them that will give themselves a deep gash with a scimitar, either in their arms or thighs. I am very glad witnesses are so ready at hand, where we have most need of them, for Christendom affordeth many. And after the example of our holy guide, there have been divers, who for devotion would needs bear the cross. We learn by a worthy testimony of religion, that Saint Louis the King wore a hair shirt, until such time as he was so aged that his confessor gave him a dispensation for it, and that every Friday he caused his priests to beat his shoulders with five little iron chains, which to that purpose were ever carried with his night-gear.

William, our last Duke of Guienne, father to that Eleonore,[2] who transferred that duchy unto the houses of France and England, the last ten or twelve

[1] A small Turkish coin the $\frac{1}{110}$th part of a piastre.

[2] Queen Eleanor who married first King Louis VII. of France, and afterwards Henry II. of England.

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years of his life, for penance's sake, wore continually a corselet under a religious habit. Foulkes, Earl of Anjou,[1] went to Jerusalem, there with a rope about his neck to be whipped by two of his servants, before our Saviour's sepulchre. Do we not upon every Good Friday, in sundry places, see a great number of men and women scourge and beat themselves so long, till they bruise and tear their flesh, even to the bones? I have often seen it myself, and that without enchantment; and some say (for they are masked) there were some amongst them, who for money would undertake thereby to warrant other men's religion, by a contempt of smartful pain, so much the greater, by how much the stings of devotion are of more force, than those of covetousness. Q. Maximus buried his son who had been consul: Marcus Cato his, being elected prætor; and L. Paulus both his, within few days, with so cheerful and settled a countenance, and without any shew of sorrow. I have sometimes by way of jesting told one that he had confronted divine justice; for the violent death of three tall children of his, coming unto his ears all upon one day, and sent him, as it may be imagined, as a great scourge, he was so far from mourning, that he rather took it as a favour and singular gratification at God's hand. I do not follow these monstrous humours. Yet have I lost two or three myself, whilst they were young and at nurse, if not without apprehension of sorrow, yet without continuance of grief. And there is no accident woundeth men deeper, or

[1] Foulkes III., b. 972, Count d'Anjou 987–1043, surnamed Nerra or the Black.

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goeth so near the heart, as the loss of children. I see divers other common occasions of affliction, which, were I assailed by them, I should scarcely feel. And I have contemned and neglected some, when it hath pleased God to visit me with them, on which the world setteth so ugly and baleful a countenance, that I hardly dare boast of them without blushing. "Ex quo intelligitur, non in natura, sed in opinione esse ægretudinem" (CIC., *ib.*, iii.): "Whereby it is understood, that grief consisteth not in nature, but opinion." Opinion is a powerful, bold, and unmeasurable party. Who doth ever so greedily search after restful ease and quietness, as Alexander and Cæsar have done after difficulties and unquietness? Terez,[1] the father of Sitalcez, was wont to say, "that when he had no wars, he thought there was no difference between him and his horse-keeper." Cato the Consul, to assure himself of certain towns in Spain, having only interdicted some of[2] their inhabitants to wear arms, many of them killed themselves: "Ferox gens nullam vitam rati sine armis esse": "A fierce kind of people that thought there was no life without arms." How many know we who have abandoned and forsaken the pleasure of an easeful and quiet life in their houses, and to live with their friends and acquaintance, to follow the toiling horror of unfrequented deserts, and that yielded and cast themselves unto the abjectness, contempt, and vilifying of the world, wherewith they have so pleased themselves, as nothing more? Cardinal Boromeus, who died

[1] King of the Thracians about 430 to 420 B.C.

[2] Omit "some of."

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lately at Milan, in the midst of[1] the pleasures and debauches to which his nobility[2] and the great riches he possessed enticed him and the air of Italy afforded him, and his youth allured him, did ever keep himself in so austere a form of life that the same gown which served him in summer he wore in winter. He never lay but upon straw; the hours which he might conveniently spare from his charge he bestowed in continual study, ever kneeling, and having a small quantity of bread and water by his book's side, which was all the provision for his repast, and time he employed in it.

I know some who wittingly have drawn both profit and preferment from cuckoldry, the only name whereof is so irksome and baleful to so many men.

If sight be not the most necessary of our senses, at least is it the most pleasing: the most plausible and profitable of our members, seem those that serve to beget us: notwithstanding divers have mortally hated them, only because they were over much amiable, and for their worth's sake have rejected them. So thought he of his eyes, that voluntarily put them out. The most common and soundest part of men holdeth multitude of children to be a sign of great happiness and comfort; so do I, and many others, the want of them. And when Thales was demanded "wherefore he did not marry," he answered, "because he would leave no issue or line of himself behind him."

[1] *I. e.*, surrounded by.

[2] San Carlo Borromeo, the patron saint of Milan, lived 1538–1584. He was born of a rich and powerful family, but decided for the simplest kind of life; celebrated for his learning and the charity he displayed while Archbishop of Milan.

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That our opinion endeareth and increaseth the price of things, it is seen in a great number of them, which we do not regard to esteem them but for our use. And we neither consider their qualities nor utilities, but only our cost to recover and attain them, as if it were a part of their substance; and we call that worth in them, not what they bring us, but what we bring to them. According[1] as it weigheth, and is of consequence, so it serveth. Whereupon I perceive, we are thrifty husbands of what we lay out. Our opinion never suffers it to run a false gallop. The price giveth a diamond his title, difficulty to virtue, pain unto devotion, and sharpness unto physic. Such a one, to come unto poverty, cast those few crowns he had into the same sea, wherein so many others, with such cark, danger, and care, on all parts seek to fish for riches. Epicurus saith, that "to be rich is no ease, but a charge[2] of affairs." Verily, it is not want, but rather plenty that causeth avarice. I will speak of mine own experience, concerning this subject.

I have lived in three kinds of condition, since I came out of my infancy. The first time, which continued well-nigh twenty years, I have passed it over, as one who had no other means but casual, and depending from the direction and help of others, without any certain maintenance, or regular prescription. My expenses were so much the more carelessly laid out, and lavishly employed, by how much more they wholly depended on fortune's rashness and exhibition. I never lived so well at ease: my

[1] This sentence should come only after the following one.

[2] *Charge.*—Substitute "change."

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fortune was never to find my friends' purse shut: besides which, I was to frame myself to all necessities: the care I took to pay every man at his prefixed day, which a thousand times they have prolonged, seeing the care I took to satisfy them. So that I had gotten unto myself the credit of a thrifty kind of good husbandry, though it were something shifting and deceitful. I do naturally feel a kind of pleasing contentment in paying of my debts, as if I rid myself of a burthenous weight, and free myself from the yoke of bondage and ingratitude.[1] Besides, methinks I feel a kind of delight, that tickleth me to the quick, in performing a lawfully just action, and contenting of others. I except payments that require delays, covenants, and after-reckonings: for, if I find[2] any body that will undertake them, I blushingly and injuriously defer them as long as I can, for fear of that altercation or wrangling, to which my humour and manner of speech is altogether incompatible. There is nothing I hate more than driving of bargains: it is a mere commerce of dodging and impudence. After an hour's debating and paltering, both parties will go from their words and oaths for the getting or saving of a shilling: yet did I borrow with great disadvantage. For, having no heart to borrow before others, or by word of mouth, I would adventure it upon a piece of paper, which with some hath no great power to move or force to persuade, and which greatly helps to refuse, I was wont to commit the success of my wants more freely and more carelessly

[1] *And ingratitude.*—Addition to the text.

[2] *If I find.*—Substitute "if I do not find."

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unto fortune, than I have done since unto my wit and providence. Most good husbands think it strange and horrible to live on such uncertainties, but they remember not that most men in the world live so. How many good and well-born men have heretofore, and are daily seen to neglect and leave at six and seven their patrimonies and certain goods, to follow and seek after court-holy water, and wavering favours of princes and of fortune; Cæsar engaged and indebted himself above a million of gold more than he was worth, to become Cæsar. And how many merchants and poor beginners set up and begin their traffic by the sale of their farms or cottages which they venter to the Indias?

Tot per impotentia freta.—CATUL., *Epig.*, iv., 18.

In so great scarcity of devotion, we have thousands of colleges, which pass the time very conveniently, daily gaping and expecting from the liberality of the heavens, what they must dine withal to-morrow. Secondly they consider not that this certainty on which they ground themselves is not much less uncertain and hazardous, than hazard itself. I see misery as near beyond two thousand crowns' rent, as if it were hard at hand. For, besides that fortune hath many, many means to open a hundred gaps for poverty to enter at, even through the thickest of our riches, and that often there is no mean between the highest and lowest fortune,

Fortuna vitrea est: tum, quum splendet, frangitur,
PUB. SYR., *Mim.*

Fortune is glass-like, brittle as 't is bright:
Light-gone, light-broken, when it lends best light,

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and to turn all our defences, and raisings of high walls topsy-turvy, I find that want and necessity is by diverse or different causes, as ordinarily seen to accompany and follow those that are rich in goods, as those that have none at all: and that peradventure it is somewhat less incommodious, when it is alone, than when it meeteth with riches: they rather come from order, than from receipt: "Faber est suæ quisque fortunæ" (SALLUST, *De Rep. ordin.*, i., 1): "Every man is the forger of his own fortune." And methinks that a rich man, who is needy, full of business, cark, and toil, and troubled in mind, is more miserable than he that is simply poor. "In divitiis inopes, quod genus egestatis gravissimum est" (SEN., *Epist.* lxxiv., p.): "In their abundance indigent, which is the most grievous kind of indigence." The richest and greatest princes are ordinarily urged by poverty and need unto extreme necessities. For, can any be more extreme, than thereby to become tyrants, and unjust usurpers of their subjects' goods?

My second manner of life hath been to have money; which when I had once fingered, according to my condition I sought to hoard up some against a rainy day; esteeming that it was no having, unless a man had ever somewhat besides his ordinary expenses in possession; and that a man should not trust that good, which he must live in hope to receive; and that, be his hope never so likely, he may many ways be prevented. For I would say unto myself: "What if I should be surprised by this chance, or that accident? What should I do then?"

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And in pursuit of these vain and vicious imaginations, I endeavoured by hook or crook, and by wile or wit to provide by this superfluous sparing for all inconveniences that might happen: and I could answer him that would allege the number of inconveniences to be over-infinite; which [1] if they followed not all men, they accompanied some, and haply the greatest number; an apprehension which I did not pass without some painful care. I kept the matter secret, and I (that dare say so much of myself) would never speak of my money but falsely, as others do, who being rich, would seem to be poor, or being poor would appear rich, and dispense with their conscience never to witness sincerely what they are worth. Oh ridiculous and shameful prudence. Did I travel anywhere? methought I was never sufficiently provided; and the more I had laden myself with coin, the more I had also burthened myself with fear: sometimes of my way's safety, other times of their trust that had the charge of my sumpters and baggage, whereof as some others that I know, methought I was never thoroughly assured, except it were still in my sight. Left I my keys or my purse behind me? how many suspicions and thorny imaginations, and, which is worse, incommunicable, did incessantly haunt me? My mind was ever on my halfpenny; my thoughts ever that way. The sum being rightly cast, there is ever more pain in keeping, than in getting of money. If I did not altogether so much as I say, I at the least endeavoured to do it. Of commodity

[1] Substitute for this sentence the following: "That if I had not to fear them all I might have to fear some of them."

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I had little or nothing. To[1] have more means of expenses, is ever to have increase of sorrow. For (as said Bion) "the hairy man doth grieve as much as the bald, if he have his hair pulled out." And after you are once accustomed and have fixed your thoughts upon a heap of money, it is no longer at your service; you dare not diminish it; it is a building, which if you touch or take any part from it, you will think it will all fall. Necessity must first pinch you by the throat, and touch you near, before you will lay hands on it. And[2] I should sooner pawn my clothes, or sell my horse, with less care and compulsion, than make a breach into that beloved purse, which I kept in store. But the danger was, that a man can hardly prefix any certain limits unto his desire (they are hard to be found in things a man deemeth good) and continue at one stay in sparing: a man shall ever increase this heap, and augment it from one number to another; yea so long, till he basely and niggardly deprive himself of the enjoying of his own goods, and wholly fix it on the safe-keeping of them, and never use them. According to this kind of usage, those are the richest people of the world, that have the charge of keeping the gates and walls of a rich city. Every moneyed man is covetous, according to mine opinion. Plato marshalleth thus human or corporal goods: "health, beauty, strength, riches. And riches" (saith he)

[1] For this sentence substitute the following: "Although having more with which to meet my expenditure, my expenditure was none the less heavy for it."

[2] For the following substitute: "And formerly I pawned my clothes or sold my horse with less care and compulsion than now I made a breach," etc.

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"are not blind, but clear-seeing, if they be illuminated by wisdom." Dionysius the Younger played a notable part, who being advertised that one of his Syracusans had hidden a certain treasure under the ground, commanded him to bring it unto him, which he did, reserving secretly one part of it unto himself, with which he removed his dwelling unto another city, where having lost the humour of hoarding up of treasure, began to live[1] a spending and riotous kind of life: which Dionysius hearing, commanded the remainder of his treasure, and which he had taken from him, to be restored unto him; saying, that "since he had learned how to make use of it, he did most willingly redeliver the same unto him."

I was some years of the same humour: I wot not what good demon did most profitably remove me from it, like to the Syracusan, and made me to neglect my sparing, the pleasure I apprehended of a far and chargeable journey, having overthrown this foolish imagination in me; from which I am fallen into a third kind of life (I speak what I think of it) assuredly much more pleasing and formal, which is, that I measure my garment according to my cloth, and let my expenses go together with my coming-in; sometimes the one, otherwhilst the other exceeds: but they are never far asunder. I live from hand to mouth, from day to day, and have I but to supply my present and ordinary needs, I am satisfied: as for extraordinary wants, all the provisions of the world will not suffice them. And it is folly to expect that fortune will ever sufficiently arm us against herself. It is with our own weapons

[1] *To live, etc.*—The text has "to spend more liberally."

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that we must combat her. Casual arms will betray us, when we shall have most need of them. If I lay up anything, it is for the hope of some employment at hand, and not to purchase lands, whereof I have no need, but pleasure and delight. "Non esse cupidum, pecunia est: non esse emacem, vectigal est" (CIC., *Parad. ult.*): "It is current coin, not to be covetous: it is a thrifty income, not to be still buying." I am neither possessed with fear, that my goods shall fail me, nor with desire they should increase and multiply. "Divitiarum fructus est in copia: copiam declarat satietas (*ibid.*): "The fruit of riches is in plenty: satiety, content with enough, approves that plenty." And I singularly gratify myself this correction came upon me in an age naturally inclined to covetousness, and that I am free from that folly so common and peculiar to old men, and the most ridiculous of all human follies.

Feraulez who had passed through both fortunes, and found, that increase of goods was no accrease of appetite to drink, to eat, to sleep, or to embrace his wife; and who on the other side felt heavily on his shoulders the importunity of ordering and directing his economical affairs, as it doth on mine, determined with himself to content a poor young man, his faithful friend, greedily gaping after riches, and frankly made him a present donation of all his great and excessive riches, as also of those he was likely every day to get by the liberality and bounty of his good master Cyrus, and by war: always provided, he should undertake to entertain and find him honestly, and in good sort, as his guest and friend. In which estate they lived afterward most

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happily, and mutually content with the change of their condition.

Lo here a part I could willingly find in my heart to imitate. And I much commend the fortune of an old prelate, whom I see to have so clearly given over his purse, his receipts, and his expenses, now to one of his chosen servants, and now to another, that he hath lived many years as ignorant of his household affairs, as any stranger. The confidence in others' honesty is no light testimony of one's own integrity: therefore doth God willingly favour it. And for his regard, I see no household order, neither more worthily directed, nor more constantly managed than his. Happy is that man, that hath so proportionably directed his estate, as his riches may discharge and supply the same, without care or encumbrance to himself; and that neither their consultation or meetings may in any sort interrupt other affairs, or disturb other occupations, which he followeth, more convenient, more quiet, and better agreeing with his heart.

Therefore doth ease and indigence depend from every man's own opinion; and wealth and riches no more than glory or health, have either more pre-eminence or pleasure than he who possesseth them lendeth them. Every man is either well or ill, according as he finds himself. Not he whom another thinks content, but he is content indeed, that thinks he is so himself: and only in that, opinion giveth itself essence and verity. Fortune doth us neither good nor ill: she only offereth us the seed and matter of it, which our mind, more powerful than she, turneth and applieth as best it pleaseth: as the effi-

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cient cause and mistress of condition, whether happy or unhappy. External accessions take both savour and colour from the internal constitution, as garments do not warm us by their heat, but by ours, which they are fit to cover and nourish: he that with clothes should cover a cold body, should draw the very same service from them by cold. So is snow and ice kept in summer.[1] Verily as unto an idle and lazy body study is but a torment, abstinence from wine to a drunkard is a vexation, frugality is a heart's sorrow to the luxurious, and exercise molesteth an effeminate body, so is it of all things else. Things are not of themselves so irksome, nor so hard, but our baseness, and weakness maketh them such. To judge of high and great matters, a high and great mind is required; otherwise we attribute that vice unto them, which indeed is ours. A straight oar being under water seemeth to be crooked. It is no matter to see a thing, but the matter is how a man doth see the same.

Well, of so many discourses, which diversely persuade men to contemn death and patiently to endure pain, why shall we not find some one to make for our purpose? and of so several and many kinds of imaginations, that have persuaded the same unto others why doth not every man apply one unto himself, that is most agreeing with his humour? If he cannot digest a strong and abstersive drug, for to remove his evil, let him at least take a lenitive pill to ease the same. "Opinio est quædam effeminata ac levis: nec in dolore magis, quam eadem in voluptate: quâ, quum liquescimus fluimusque mollitia,

[1] *In summer.*—Addition to the text.

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apis aculeum sine clamore ferre non possumus. Totum in eo est, ut tibi impercs" (CIC., *Tusc. Quest.*, ii.): "There is a certain effeminate and light opinion, and that no more in sorrow, than it is in pleasure, whereby when we melt and run over in dainty tenderness, we cannot abide to be stung of a bee, but must roar and cry out. This is the total sum of all, that you be master of yourself." Moreover, a man doth not escape from philosophy by making the sharpness of pains and human weakness to prevail so far beyond measure: for, she is compelled to cast herself over again unto these invincible replications. If it be bad to live in necessity, at least there is no necessity to live in necessity. No man is long time ill, but by his own fault. He that hath not the heart to endure neither life nor death, and that will neither resist nor run away, what shall a man do to him?

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CHAPTER XX

OF THE UNCERTAINTY OF OUR JUDGMENT

IT is even as, that verse saith:

Ἐπέων δὲ πολὺς νομὸς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.

HOM., *Il.*, XX., 249.

Of words on either side,
A large dole they divide.

"There is law sufficient to speak everywhere, both *pro* and *contra*," as for example:

Vince Hannibal, et non seppe usar' poi
Ben la vittoriosa sua ventura.

PET., p. iii., Son. lxxxvi.

Hannibal conquer'd, but he knew not after
To use well his victorious good fortune.

He that shall take this part, and with our men go about, to make that oversight prevail, that we did not lately pursue our fortune at Moncontour[1]: or he that shall accuse the King of Spain, who could not use the advantage he had against us at Saint Quentin,[2] may say this fault to have proceeded from a mind drunken with his good fortune, and from a

[1] Victory gained by the Catholics over the Protestants, October 3, 1569.

[2] Defeat of the French by the Spaniards, August 10, 1557.

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courage which, full-gorged with the beginning of good luck, loseth the taste how to increase it, being already hindered from digesting what he hath conceived of it: he hath his hands full, and cannot take hold any more: unworthy that ever fortune should cast so great a good into his lap: for what profit hath he of it, if, notwithstanding, he give his enemy leisure and means to recover himself? What hope may one have, that he will once more adventure to charge these re-enforced and re-united forces, and new armed with despite and vengeance, that durst not, or knew not how to pursue them being dismayed and put to rout?

Dum fortuna calet, dum conficit omnia terror.
LUCAN., vii., 734.

While fortune is at height in heat,
And terror worketh all by great.

But to conclude, what can he expect better, than what he hath lately lost? It is not, as at fence, where the number of venies given gets the victory: so long as the enemy is on foot a man is newly to begin. It is no victory, except it end the war. In that conflict where Cæsar had the worst, near the city of Oricum, he reproachfully said unto Pompey's soldiers, "that he had utterly been overthrown, had their captain known how to conquer": and paid him home after another fashion when it came to his turn.

But why may not a man also hold the contrary? That it is the effect of an insatiate and rash-headlong mind, not to know how to limit or period his covetousness: that it is an abusing of God's favours to go

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about to make them lose the measure he hath prescribed them, and that anew to cast himself into danger after the victory is once more to remit the same unto the mercy of fortune: that one of the chiefest policies in military profession is, not to drive his enemy unto despair. Sulla and Marius in the social war, having discomfited the Marsians, seeing one squadron of them yet on foot, which through despair, like furious beasts were desperately coming upon them, could not be induced to stay or make head against them. If the fervour of Monsieur de Foix[1] had not drawn him over-rashly and moodily to pursue the stragglers of the victory at Ravenna, he had not blemished the same with his untimely death; yet did the fresh-bleeding memory of his example serve to preserve the lord of Anguien from the like inconvenience, at Cerisoles.[2] It is dangerous to assail a man whom you have bereaved of all other means to escape or shift for himself, but by his weapons: for necessity is a violent school-mistress, and which teacheth strange lessons[3]: "Gravissimi sunt morsus irritatæ necessitatis": "No biting so grievous, as that of necessity provoked and enraged."

Vincitur haud gratis jugulo qui provocat hostem.
LUCAN., iv., 278.

For nought you overcome him not,
Who bids his foe come cut his throat.

[1] Gaston de Foix, killed when only twenty-three years of age on the battle-field of Ravenna, where he had just won a signal victory, April 11, 1512.

[2] Cerisola, a victory of the French, led by Count d'Anguien, or rather d'Enghien, over the Spaniards, April 14, 1544.

[3] *And which teacheth, etc.*—Addition to the text.

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And that is the reason, why Pharax impeached the King of Lacedemon, who came from gaining of a victory against the Mantinæans, from going to charge a thousand Argians, that were escaped whole from the discomfiture; but rather to let them pass with all liberty, lest he should come to make trial of provoked and despised virtue, through and by ill fortune. Clodomire, King of Aquitaine, after his victory, pursuing Gondemar, King of Burgundy,[1] vanquished and running away, forced him to make a stand, and make head again: but his unadvised wilfulness deprived him of the fruit of the victory, for he died in the action.

Likewise he that should choose, whether it were best to keep his soldiers richly and sumptuously armed, or only for necessity, should seem to yield in favour of the first, whereof was Sertorius, Philopœmen, Brutus, Cæsar, and others, urging that it is ever a spur to honour and glory, for a soldier to see himself gorgeously attired, and richly armed, and an occasion to yield himself more obstinate to fight, having the care to save his arms, as his goods and inheritance; a reason (saith Xenophon) why the Asiatics carried with them, when they went to wars, their wives and concubines, with all their jewels and chiefest wealth. And might also incline to the other side, which is, that a man should rather remove from his soldier all care to preserve himself, than to increase it unto him: for by that means he shall doubly fear to hazard or engage himself, seeing these rich spoils do rather increase an earnest desire

[1] Allusion to the battle of Vézéronce, won by the Burgundians in 524 A.D.

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of victory in the enemy: and it hath been observed, that the said respect hath sometimes wonderfully encouraged the Romans against the Samnites. Antiochus shewing the army he prepared against them gorgeously accoutred with all pomp and stateliness unto Hannibal, and demanding of him whether the Romans would be contented with it, "Yea, verily," answered the other, "they will be very well pleased with it: they must needs be so, were they never so covetous." Lycurgus forbade his soldiers, not only all manner of sumptuousness, in their equipage, but also to uncase or strip their enemies, when they overcame them, willing, as he said, that frugality and poverty should shine with the rest of the battle.

Both at sieges, and elsewhere, where occasion brings us near the enemy, we freely give our soldiers liberty to brave, to disdain, and injure him with all manner of reproaches, and not without appearance of reason; for it is no small matter to take from them all hope of grace and composition, in presenting unto them that there is no way left to expect it from him whom they have so egregiously outraged, and that there is no remedy left but from victory. Yet had Vitellius but bad success in that; for, having to deal with Otho, weaker in his soldiers' valour, and of long disaccustomed from war, and effeminated through the delights and pleasures of the city, himself in the end set them so on fire with his reproachful and injurious words, upbraiding them with their pusillanimity and faint-heartedness, and with the regret of their ladies, banquetings, and sensualities, which they had left at Rome, that he put them into heart again, which

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no persuasions or other means could do before; and thereby drew them, whom nought could have driven, to fight, and fall upon him. And verily, when they are injuries that touch a man to the quick, they shall easily urge him, who was very backward to fight for his king's quarrel, to be very forward in his own cause or interest.

If a man but consider of what consequence the preservation and importance the safety of a general is in an army, and how the enemy's chiefest aim is at the fairest mark, which is the head, from which all others depend, it seemeth that that counsel cannot be doubted of, which by sundry great chieftains we have seen put in practice, which is, in the beginning of the fight, or in the fury of the battle, to disguise themselves. Notwithstanding the inconvenience a man may by this means incur is no less than that mischief, which a man seeketh to avoid: for the captain being unseen and unknown of his soldiers, the courage they take by his example and the heart they keep by his presence is therewithal impaired and diminished; and losing the known ensigns and accustomed marks of their leader, they either deem him dead, or despairing of any good success, to be fled. And touching experience, we sometimes see it to favour the one and sometimes the other party. The accident of Pyrrhus in the battle he had against the Consul Levinus in Italy, served us for both uses: for, by concealing himself under the arms of Demogacles, and arming him with his own, indeed he saved his life, but was in great danger to fall into the other mischief, and lose the day. Alexander, Cæsar, Lucullus loved (at what

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time they were to enter fight) to arm and attire themselves with the richest arms and garish clothes they had, and of particular bright-shining colours. Agis, Agesilaus, and that great Gilippus, contrary, would ever go to wars meanly accoutred, and without any imperial ornament.

Among other reproaches, that Pompey is charged withal in the battle of Pharsalia, this is one especial, that he idly lingered with his army, expecting what his enemy would attempt; forasmuch "as that (I will here borrow the very words of Plutarch, which are of more consequence than mine) weakeneth the violence that running giveth the first blows, and therewithal removeth the charging of the combatants one against another, which more than any other thing is wont to fill them with fury and impetuosity, when with vehemence they come to intershock one another, augmenting their courage by the cry and running, and in a manner allayeth and quaileth the heat of the soldiers." Lo here what he saith concerning this. But had Cæsar lost, who might not also have said, that contrariwise the strongest and firmest situation is that wherein a man keeps his stand without budging, and that who is settled in his march, closing, and against any time of need, sparing his strength in himself, hath a great advantage against him that is in motion and disordered, and that running hath already consumed part of his breath? Moreover, that an army being a body composed of so many several parts, it is impossible it should in such fury advance itself with so just a march and proportioned a motion, and not break and disrank, or at least alter her ordinance,

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and that the nimblest be not grappling before his fellows may help him. In that dreary battle of the two Persian brethren,[1] Clearchus the Lacedemonian, who commanded the Grecians that followed Cyrus's faction, led them fair and gently without any haste-making to their charges; but when he came within fifty paces of his enemies, he bade them with all speed to run unto it, hoping by the shortness of the distance to manage their order, and direct their breath; in the meantime giving them the advantage of the impetuosity, both for their bodies, and for their shooting arms. Others have ordered this doubt in their army after this manner: if your enemies headlong run upon you, stay for them and budge not: if they without stirring stay for you, run with fury upon them.

In the passage[2] which the Emperor Charles V. made into Provence, our King Francis I. stood a good while upon this choice, whether it were best, by way of prevention, to go and meet with him in Italy, or to stay his coming into France: and albeit he considered what an advantage it is, for one to preserve his house from the troubles and mischiefs that war brings with it, to the end that possessing her whole strength, it may continually in all times of need, store him with money, and supply him with all other helps; and considering how the necessity of direful war doth daily enforce a general to make spoil of goods, and waste the country, which cannot well be done in our own goods and country: and if[3]

[1] The battle of Cunaxa, between Artaxerxes and Cyrus the younger.
[2] In reality *invasion*.
[3] For *if* substitute "that also."

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the countryman doth not as patiently endure this ravage at his friends' hands, as at his enemies', so as seditions may ensue amongst our own factions, and troubles among our friends: that licence to rob and spoil, which in his country may not be tolerated, is a great furtherance in a soldier, and makes him the more willing to endure the miseries and toilings that follow war: and what a hard matter it is to keep the soldier in office and heart, who hath no other hope of profit, but his bare pay, and is so near his wife, his children, his friends, and his home: "that he who layeth the cloth, is ever put to the greatest charges: that there is more pleasure in assailing than in defending: and that the apprehension of a battle lost in our own home and entrails, is so violent, that it may easily shake the whole frame, and distemper the whole body; seeing there is no passion so contagious, as that of fear, nor so easy apprehended and taken a-trust, or doth more furiously possess all parts of man; and that the cities or towns, which have either heard the bustling noise of the tempest, or seen the sparkles of this all-consuming fire at their gates, or have perhaps received their captains wounded, their citizens pursued, and their soldiers spoiled, and all out of breath, if they be not more than obstinately constant, it is a thousand to one, if in that brunt of fury, they do not headlong cast themselves into some desperate resolution: yet did he conclude and choose this resolve for the best: first to revoke his forces he had beyond the mountains in Italy, and to stay his enemy's approaches. For he might on the contrary part imagine, that being in his own country, and amidst good friends,

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he had the better leisure to reinforce his decayed forces, and more opportunity to strengthen towns, to munite castles, to store rivers with all necessaries they wanted, and to keep all passages at his devotion, which done, all the ways should be open for him, and might by them have all manner of victuals, money, and other habiliments of war brought him, in safety, and without convoy,[1] that he should have his subjects so much the more affectionate unto him, by how much nearer they should see the danger; that having so many cities, towns, holds, castles, and bars for his security, he might at all times, according to opportunity and advantage, appoint and give law unto the fight; and if he were pleased to temporise, whilst he took his ease, kept his forces whole, and maintained himself in safety, he might see his enemy consume and waste himself, by the difficulties which daily must necessarily assault, environ and combat him, as he who should be engaged in an enemy country and foe-land; where he should have nothing, nor meet with anything, either before or behind him, or of any side that did not offer him continual war: no way nor means to refresh, to ease or give his army elbow-room, if any sickness or contagion should come amongst his men; nor shelter to lodge his hurt and maimed soldiers: where neither money, munition, nor victuals might come unto him, but at the sword's point; where he should never have

[1] The whole sentence, from "he had the better leisure," is sadly mangled by F. Substitute for his translation: "he could not fail to be well supplied with all commodities; the rivers and roads, all under his control, would bring him provisions and money with perfect safety, and without any need of military escort."

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leisure to take any rest, or breath; where he should have no knowledge of places, passages, woods, fords, rivers, or country, that might defend him from ambuscades, or surprises: and if he should unfortunately chance to lose a battle, no hope to save, or means to reunite the relics of his forces. And there want not examples to strengthen both sides.

Scipio found it better for him to invade his enemy's country of Africa, than to defend his own, and fight with him in Italy, where he was, wherein he had good success. But contrariwise, Hannibal, in the same war wrought his own overthrow by leaving the conquest of a foreign country, for to go and defend his own. The Athenians having left the enemy in their own land, for to pass into Sicily,[1] had very ill-success, and were much contraried by fortune: whereas Agathocles King of Syracuse[2] prospered and was favoured by her, what time he passed into Africa, and left the war on foot in his own country.

And we are accustomed to say with some show of reason, that especially in matters of war, the events depend (for the greatest part) on fortune; which seldom will yield, or never subject herself unto our discourse or wisdom, as say these ensuing verses:

Et malè consultis pretium est, prudentia fallax,
Nec fortuna probat causas sequiturque merentes:
Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur:
Scilicet est aliud quod nos cogatque regatque
Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges.

MANIL., *Astr.*, iv., 95.

[1] During the Peloponnesian War. [2] Born 361, died 289 B.C.

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'T is best for ill-advis'd, wisdom may fail,
Fortune proves not the cause that should prevail,
But here and there without respect doth sail,
A higher power forsooth us over-draws,
And mortal states guides with immortal laws.

But if it be well taken, it seemeth that our counsels and deliberations do as much depend of her; and that fortune doth also engage our discourses and consultations in her trouble and uncertainty. "We reason rashly, and discourse at random," saith Timeus in Plato: "For, even as we, so have our discourses great participation with the temerity of hazard."

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CHAPTER XXI

OF AGE

I CANNOT receive that manner, whereby we establish the continuance of our life. I see that some of the wiser sort do greatly shorten the same, in respect of the common opinion. "What," said Cato Junior, to those who sought to hinder him from killing himself, "do I now live the age, wherein I may justly be reproved to leave my life too soon?" Yet was he but eight and forty years old. He thought that age very ripe, yea, and well advanced, considering how few men come unto it. And such as entertain themselves with[1] I wot not what kind of course, which they call natural, promiseth some few years beyond, might do it, had they a privilege that could exempt them from so great a number of accidents, unto which each one of us stands subject by a natural subjection, and which may interrupt the said course, they propose unto themselves. What fondness is it for a man to think he shall die for and through a failing and defect of strength, which extreme age draweth with it, and to propose that term unto our life, seeing it is the rarest kind of all deaths, and least in use? We only

[1] Supply *that*.

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call it natural, as if it were against nature to see a man break his neck with a fall, to be drowned by shipwreck, to be surprised with a pestilence, or pleurisy, and as if our ordinary condition did not present these inconveniences unto us all. Let us not flatter ourselves with these fond-goodly words; a man may peradventure rather call that natural, which is general, common, and universal.

To die of age is a rare, singular, and extraordinary death, and so much less natural than others: it is the last and extremest kind of dying: the farther it is from us, so much the less is it to be hoped for. Indeed it is the limit beyond which we shall not pass, and which the law of nature hath prescribed unto us as that which should not be outgone by any; but it is a rare privilege peculiar unto herself to make us continue unto it. It is an exemption which through some particular favour she bestoweth on some one man in the space of two or three ages, discharging him from the crosses, troubles, and difficulties she hath interposed between both, in this long career and pilgrimage. Therefore my opinion is, to consider that the age unto which we are come[1] is an age whereto few arrive: since men come not unto it by any ordinary course, it is a sign we are very forward. And since we have passed the accustomed bounds, which is the true measure of our life, we must not hope that we shall go much farther. Having escaped so many occasions of death, wherein we see the world to fall, we must acknowledge that

[1] That is, very likely, between forty and forty-five, as the *Essays* were begun when Montaigne was thirty-eight, and first published when he was forty-seven years old.

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such an extraordinary fortune as that is, which maintaineth us, and is beyond the common use, is not likely to continue long.

It is a fault of the very laws, to have this false imagination: they allow not a man to be capable and of discretion, to manage and dispose of his own goods, until he be five and twenty years old, yet shall he hardly preserve the state of his life so long. Augustus abridged five years of the ancient Roman Laws, and declared, that for any man that should take upon him the charge of judgment it sufficed to be thirty years old. Servius Tullius dispensed with the Knights, who were seven and forty years of age, from all voluntary services of war. Augustus brought them to forty and five. To send men to their place of sojourning[1] before they be five and fifty or three score years of age, me seemeth, carrieth no great appearance with it. My advice would be, that our vacation, and employment should be extended, as far as might be for the public commodity; but I blame some, and condemn most, that we begin not soon enough to employ ourselves. The same Augustus had been universal and supreme judge of the world, when he was but nineteen years old, and would have another to be thirty, before he shall be made a competent judge of a cottage or farm.

As for my part, I think our minds are as full grown and perfectly jointed at twenty years as they should be, and promise as much as they can. A mind which at that age hath not given some evident token or earnest of her sufficiency, shall hardly

[1] *I. e.*, of retirement.

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give it afterward[1]; put her to what trial you list.[2] Natural qualities and virtues, if they have any vigorous or beauteous thing in them, will produce and show the same within that time, or never. They say in Dauphiné:

Si l'espine non picque quand nai,[3]
A peine que picque jamai.

A thorn, unless at first it prick,
Will hardly ever pierce to th' quick.

Of all humane, honourable, and glorious actions, that ever came unto my knowledge, of what nature soever they be, I am persuaded I should have a harder task, to number those,[4] which both in ancient times, and in ours, have been produced and achieved before the age of thirty years, than such as were performed after: yea, often in the life of the same men. May not I boldly speak it of those of Hannibal, and Scipio his great adversary? They lived the better part of their life with the glory which they had gotten in their youth: and though afterward they were great men, in respect of all others, yet were they but mean in regard of themselves. As for my particular, I am verily persuaded, that since that age, both my spirit and my body have more decreased than increased, more recoiled than advanced. It may be that knowledge and experience shall increase in them, together with life, that

[1] Substitute "No mind which," etc., "has ever given it afterwards."

[2] *Put her, etc.* Addition to text.

[3] These two lines are in the dialect of Dauphiné.

[4] Montaigne says the reverse, *i. e.*, "I should have the larger share to number in those, etc.

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bestow their time well: but vivacity, promptitude, constancy, and other parts much more our own, more important and more essential, they droop, they languish, and they faint;

Ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi
Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,
Claudicat ingenium, delirat linguaque mensque.
LUCR., iii., 452.

When once the body by shrewd strength of years
Is shak't, and limbs drawn down from strength that wears,
Wit halts, both tongue and mind
Do daily dote, we find.

It is the body, which sometimes yieldeth first unto age; and other times the mind: and I have seen many, that have had their brains weakened before their stomach or legs. And forasmuch, as it is a disease little or nothing sensible unto him that endureth it and maketh no great show, it is so much the more dangerous. Here I exclaim against our laws, not because they leave us so long and late in working and employment, but that they set us a work no sooner, and it is so late before we be employed. Methinks that considering the weakness of our life, and seeing the infinite number of ordinary rocks, and natural dangers it is subject unto, we should not so soon as we come into the world, allot so great a share thereof unto unprofitable wantonness in youth, ill-breeding, idleness, and slow-learning prenticeship.[1]

[1] Montaigne's meaning is here somewhat altered by the translator. The French author merely says: "No such great share ought to be given to birth, idleness, and apprenticeship."

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CHAPTER XXII

OF CONSCIENCE

MY brother the lord of Brouze[1] and myself, during the time of our civil wars, travelling one day together, we fortuned to meet upon the way with a gentleman, in outward semblance, of good demeanour: he was of our contrary[2] faction, but forasmuch as he counterfeited himself otherwise I knew it not. And the worst of these tumultuous intestine broils is, that the cards are so shuffled (your enemy being neither by language nor by fashion, nor by any other apparent mark distinguished from you, nay, which is more, brought up under the same laws and customs, and breathing the same air) that it is a very hard matter to avoid confusion and shun disorder. Which consideration made me not a little fearful to meet with our troops, especially where I was not known, lest I should be urged to tell my name, and haply do worse, as other times before it had befallen me; for, by such a chance, or rather mistaking, I fortuned once to lose all my

[1] Montaigne had three brothers: Pierre, sieur de La Brousse; Arnaud, known as Captain Saint-Martin, and Bertrand Charles, sieur de Mattecoulon. La Brousse and Mattecoulon were two domains which had been part of the estate left by Montaigne's father at his death.

[2] *I. e.*, Huguenot.

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men and horses, and hardly escaped myself: and amongst other my losses, and servants that were slain, the thing that most grieved me, was the untimely and miserable death of a young Italian gentleman, whom I kept as my page, and very carefully brought up, with whom died as forward, as budding and as hopeful a youth as ever I saw. But this man seemed so fearfully dismayed, and at every encounter of horsemen, and passage by or through any town that held for the king, I observed him to be so strangely distracted, that in the end I perceived, and guessed they were but guilty alarms that his conscience gave him. It seemed unto this seely man, that all might apparently, both through his blushing self-accusing countenance, and by[1] the crosses he wore upon his upper garments, read the secret intentions of his faint heart. Of such marvellous-working power is the sting of conscience: which often induceth us to bewray, to accuse, and to combat ourselves; and for want of other evidences she produceth ourselves against ourselves.

Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum.
JUVEN., *Sat.*, xiii., 195.

Their mind, the tormentor of sin,
Shaking an unseen whip within.

The story of Bessus the Pœnian is so common, that even children have it in their mouths, who being found fault withal, that in mirth he had beaten down a nest of young sparrows, and then killed them, answered, he had great reason to do it;

[1] Omit "by."

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forsomuch as those young birds ceased not falsely to accuse him to have murdered his father, which parricide was never suspected to have been committed by him, and until that day had lain secret; but the revengeful furies of the conscience made the same party to reveal it that by all right was to do penance for so hateful and unnatural a murder. Hesiod correcteth the saying of Plato, that punishment doth commonly succeed the guilt, and follow sin at hand: for he affirmeth that it rather is born at the instant, and together with sin itself, and they are[1] as twins born at one birth together. Whosoever expects punishment, suffereth the same, and whosoever deserveth it, he doth expect it. Impiety doth invent, and iniquity doth frame torments against itself.

Malum consilium consultori pessimum.

AUL. GELL., iv., 5.

Bad counsel is worst for the counsellor that gives the counsel,

even as the wasp stingeth and offendeth others, but herself much more, for, in hurting others, she loseth her force and sting for ever.

Vitasque in vulnere ponunt.

VIRG., *Georg.*, iv., 238.

They, while they others sting,
Death to themselves do bring.

The Cantharides have some part in them, which by a contrariety of nature serveth as an antidote or

[1] *And they are, etc.*—Addition to the text.

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counterpoison against their poison: so likewise, as one taketh pleasure in vice, there is a certain contrary displeasure engendered in the conscience, which by sundry irksome and painful imaginations, perplexeth and tormenteth us, both waking and asleep.

Quippe ubi se multi per somnia sæpe loquentes,
Aut morbo delirantes protraxe ferantur,
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse.

LUCR., v. 1157.

Many in dreams oft speaking, or unhealed,
In sickness raving have themselves revealed,
And brought to light their sins long time concealed.

Apollodorus[1] dreamed he saw himself first flayed by the Scythians, and then boiled in a pot, and that his own heart murmured, saying: I only have caused this mischief to light upon thee. Epicurus was wont to say, that no lurking hole can shroud the wicked; for they can never assure themselves to be sufficiently hidden, since conscience is ever ready to disclose them to themselves.

Prima est hæc ultio, quòd se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur.—JUVEN., *Sat.*, xiii., 2.

This is the first revenge, no guilty mind
Is quitted, though itself be judge assign'd.

Which as it doth fill us with fear and doubt, so doth it store us with assurance and trust. And I may boldly say that I have waded through many dangerous hazards with a more untired pace, only

[1] Stoic philosopher of the first century B.C.

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in consideration of the secret knowledge I had of mine own will, and innocence of my designs.

> *Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra*
> *Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo.*
> OVID., *Fast.*, i., 485.
>
> As each man's mind is guilty, so doth he
> Inly breed hope and fear, as his deeds be.

Of examples there are thousands; it shall suffice us to allege three only, and all of one man. Scipio being one day accused before the Roman people of an urgent and capital accusation, instead of excusing himself, or flattering the judges, turning to them, he said: "It will well beseem you to undertake to judge of his head, by whose means you have authority to judge of all the world." The same man, another time, being vehemently urged by a tribune of the people, who charged him with sundry imputations, in lieu of pleading or excusing his cause, gave him this sudden and short answer: "Let us go," quoth he, "my good citizens, let us forthwith go, I say, to give hearty thanks unto the Gods for the victory which even upon such a day as this is they gave me against the Carthaginians." And therewith advancing himself to march before the people, all the assembly and even his accuser himself did undelayedly follow him towards the Temple. After that, Petilius having been animated and stirred up by Cato to solicit and demand a strict account of him, of the money he had managed and which was committed to his trust while he was in the Province of Antioch, Scipio being come into

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the Senate-house of purpose to answer for himself, pulling out the book of his accounts from under his gown, told them all that that book contained truly both the receipt and laying out thereof; and being required to deliver the same unto a clerk to register it, he refused to do it, saying he would not do himself that wrong or indignity; and thereupon with his own hands, in presence of all the Senate, tore the book in pieces. I cannot apprehend or believe that a guilty-cauterised conscience could possibly dissemble or counterfeit such an undismayed assurance: his heart was naturally too great, and inured to overhigh fortune (saith Titus Livius) to know how to be a criminal offender, and stoopingly to yield himself to the baseness to defend his innocence.

Torture and racking are dangerous inventions, and seem rather to be trials of patience than essays of truth. And both he that can, and he that cannot endure them, conceal the truth. For wherefore shall pain or smart rather compel me to confess that which is so indeed, than force me to tell that which is not? And contrariwise, if he who hath not done that whereof he is accused is sufficiently patient to endure those torments, why shall not he be able to tolerate them, who hath done it, and is guilty indeed; so dear and worthy a reward as life being proposed unto him? I am of opinion that the ground of this invention proceedeth from the consideration of the power and faculty of the conscience. For, to the guilty it seemeth to give a kind of furtherance to the torture, to make him confess his fault, and weakeneth and dismayeth him: and on the other part, it encourageth and

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strengtheneth the innocent against torture. To say truth, it is a means full of uncertainty and danger. What would not a man say, nay, what not do, to avoid so grievous pains, and shun such torments?

Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor.—PUB. SYR.

Torment to lie sometimes will drive,
Ev'n the most innocent alive,

whence it followeth that he whom the judge hath tortured, because he shall not die[1] an innocent, he shall bring him to his death, both innocent and tortured. Many thousands have thereby charged their heads with false confessions, amongst which I may well place Phylotas,[2] considering the circumstances of the indictment that Alexander framed against him, and the progress of his torture. But so it is, that (as men say) it is the least evil human weakness could invent: though, in my conceit, very inhumanely, and therewithal most unprofitably.

Many nations less barbarous in that than the Grecian, or the Roman, who term them so, judge it a horrible and cruel thing to rack and torment a man for a fault whereof you are yet in doubt. Is your ignorance long of him? What can he do withal? Are not you unjust, who because you will not put him to death without some cause, you do worse than kill him? And that it is so, consider but how often he rather chooseth to die guiltless than pass by this information, much more painful than the

[1] Montaigne writes: "in order not to kill him if innocent."

[2] Lieutenant of Alexander, put to death after confessing, while being tortured, that he had known, and failed to reveal, a conspiracy against the King's life.

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punishment or torment; and who [1] many times, by reason of the sharpness of it, preventeth, furthereth, yea, and executeth the punishment. I wot not whence I heard this story, but it exactly hath reference unto the conscience of our Justice. A country woman accused a soldier before his general, being a most severe justicier, that he, with violence, had snatched from out her poor children's hands the small remainder of some pap or water-gruel, which she had only left to sustain them, forsomuch as the army had ravaged and wasted all. The poor woman had neither witness nor proof of it; it was but her yea, and his no; which the general perceiving, after he had summoned her to be well advised what she spake, and that she should not accuse him wrongfully, for, if she spake an untruth, she should then be culpable of his accusation: but she constantly persisting to charge him, he forthwith, to discover the truth, and to be thoroughly resolved, caused the accused soldier's belly to be ripped, who was found faulty, and the poor woman to have said true; whereupon she was discharged. A condemnation instructive to others.[2]

[1] Who, *i. e.*, this information.

[2] This passage, even if no other were found of the same kind, ought to have protected Montaigne against the accusation of scepticism. He was a doubter upon many points, but not a theoretical sceptic.

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CHAPTER XXIII

OF THE AFFECTION OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN—TO THE LADY OF ESTISSAC

MADAME, if strangeness do not save, or novelty shield me, which are wont to give things reputation, I shall never, with honesty, quit myself of this enterprise[1]; yet is it so fantastical, and bears a show so different from common custom, that that may haply purchase it free passage. It is a melancholy humour, and consequently a hateful enemy to my natural complexion, bred by[2] the anxiety, and produced by the anguish of carking care, whereinto some years since I cast myself, that first put this humorous conceit of writing into my head. And finding myself afterward wholly unprovided of subject, and void of other matter, I have presented myself unto myself for a subject to write, and argument to descant upon.[3] It is the only book in the world of this kind, and of a wild extravagant design. Moreover, there is nothing in it worthy the marking but this fantasticalness. For, to so vain a ground and base a subject, the world's best work-

[1] *I. e.*, the composition of the *Essays*.

[2] *Bred by . . . care.* Substitute "Bred by the painful solitariness."

[3] *Cf.* the Preface, *The Author to the Reader*.

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man could never have given a fashion deserving to be accounted of. Now (worthy lady) since I must portray myself to the life, I should have forgotten a part of importance, if therewithal I had not presented the honour I have ever yielded to your deserts, which I have especially been willing to declare in the forefront of this chapter; forasmuch as amongst your other good parts and commendable qualities, that of loving amity which you have shown to your children holdeth one of the first ranks. Whosoever shall understand and know the age wherein your late husband the Lord of Estissac left you a widow, the great and honourable matches have been offered you (as worthy and as many as to any other lady in France of your condition) the constant resolution, and resolute constancy [1] wherewith so many years you have sustained, and even in spite, or athwart so many manifold thorny difficulties, the charge and conduct of their affairs, which have tossed, turmoiled and removed you in all corners of France, and still hold you besieged; the happy and successful forwardness you, only through your wisdom or good fortune, have given them; he will easily say with me, that in our age we have no pattern of motherly affection more exemplary than yours. I praise God (Madame) it hath been so well employed: for the good hopes which the young Lord of Estissac, your son, giveth of himself foreshow an undoubted assurance that when he shall come to years of discretion, you shall reap the obedience of a noble, and find the acknowledgment of a good child. But because, by reason of

[1] Montaigne is satisfied with *la constance et la fermeté.*

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his childhood, he could not take notice of the exceeding kindness and manifold offices he hath received from you, my meaning is, that if ever these my compositions shall haply one day come into his hands (when peradventure I shall neither have mouth nor speech to declare it unto him) he receive this testimony in all verity from me; which shall also more lively be testified unto him by the good effects (whereof, if so it please God, he shall have a sensible feeling) that there is no gentleman in France more indebted to his mother, than he; and that hereafter he cannot yield a more certain proof of his goodness, and testimony of his virtue, than in acknowledging and confessing you for such.

If there be any truly-natural law, that is to say any instinct, universally and perpetually imprinted, both in beasts and us (which is not without controversy) I may, according to mine opinion, say, that next to the care which each living creature hath to his preservation, and to fly what doth hurt him, the affection which the engenderer beareth his offspring holds the second place in this rank. And forasmuch as nature seemeth to have recommended the same unto us, aiming to extend, increase, and advance the successive parts or parcels of this her frame, it is no wonder if back-again it is not so great from children unto fathers. This other Aristotelian consideration remembered: "that he who doth benefit another, loveth him better than he is beloved of him again"[1]: and he to whom a debt is owing, loveth better than he that oweth: and every workman loveth his work better than he should be loved

[1] *Cf.* Labiche's well known comedy, *Le Voyage de M. Perrichon.*

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of it again, if it had sense or feeling. Forasmuch as we love to be, and being consisteth in moving and action, therefore is every man, in some sort or other in his own workmanship. "Whosoever doth a good deed, exerciseth a fair and honest action: whosoever receiveth, exerciseth only a profitable action." And profit is nothing so much to be esteemed or loved as honesty. Honesty is firm and permanent, affording him that did it a constant gratification. Profit is very slippery, and easily lost, nor is the memory of it so sweet, or so fresh. Such things are dearest unto us, that have cost us most: and to give is of more cost than to take.

Since it hath pleased God to endow us with some capacity of discourse, that as beasts we should not servilely be subjected to common laws, but rather with judgment and voluntary liberty apply ourselves unto them, we ought somewhat to yield unto the simple authority of Nature, but not suffer her tyrannically to carry us away: only reason ought to have the conduct of our inclinations. As for me, my taste is strangely distasted to its propensions, which in us are produced without the ordinance and direction of our judgment. As upon this subject I speak of, I cannot receive this passion wherewith some embrace children scarcely born, having neither motion in the soul, nor form well to be distinguished in the body, whereby they might make themselves lovely or amiable. And I could never well endure to have them brought up or nursed near about me. A true and well-ordered affection ought to be borne and augmented with the knowledge they give us of themselves; and then, if they deserve it (natural

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inclination marching hand in hand with reason) to cherish and make much of them, with a perfect fatherly love and loving friendship, and conformably to judge of them if they be otherwise, always yielding ourselves unto reason, notwithstanding natural power. For the most part it goeth clean contrary, and commonly we feel ourselves more moved with the sports, idleness, wantonness, and infant-trifles of our children than afterward we do with all their actions, when they be men: as if we had loved them for our pastimes, as we do apes, monkeys, or parrakeets, and not as man. And some that liberally furnish them with sporting baubles while they be children will miserably pinch it in the least expense for necessaries when they grow men. Nay, it seemeth that the jealousy we have to see them appear into and enjoy the world when we are ready to leave them makes us more sparing and close-handed toward them. It vexeth and grieveth us when we see them following us at our heels, supposing they solicit us to be gone hence: and if we were to fear that since the order of things beareth that they cannot indeed neither be, nor live, but by our being and life, we should not meddle to be fathers.

As for me, I deem it a kind of cruelty and injustice not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and to admit them as partners in the understanding of our domestical affairs (if they be once capable of it) and not to cut off and shut-up our commodities to provide for theirs, since we have engendered them to that purpose. It is mere injustice to see an old, crazed, sinnow-shrunken,

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and nigh dead father sitting alone in a chimney-corner, to enjoy so many goods as would suffice for the preferment and entertainment of many children, and in the meanwhile, for want of means, to suffer them to lose their best days and years, without thrusting them into public service and knowledge of men; whereby they are often cast into despair, to seek, by some way how unlawful soever, to provide for their necessaries. And in my days, I have seen divers young men of good houses so given to stealing and filching that no correction could divert them from it. I know one very well allied, to whom, at the instance of a brother of his (a most honest, gallant, and virtuous gentleman) I spake to that purpose, who boldly answered and confessed unto me that only by the rigour and covetousness of his father he had been forced and driven to fall into such lewdness and wickedness; but that now he was so accustomed thereto that he could not help it. And even at that time he came from stealing[1] certain jewels from a lady, in whose bed-chamber he fortuned to come with certain other gentlemen when she was rising, and had almost been taken.[2] He made me remember a tale I had heard of another gentleman, from his youth so fashioned and inclined to this goodly trade of pilfering that, coming afterward to be heir and lord of his own goods, resolved to give over that manner of life, could notwithstanding (if he chanced to come near a shop, where he saw anything he stood in need of) not choose but

[1] *He came from stealing*,—*i. e.*, "He had just stolen."

[2] *And had almost been taken*.—Substitute "He had just been caught."

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steal the same, though afterward he would ever send money and pay for it. And I have seen divers so inured to that vice, that amongst their companions, they would ordinarily steal such things, as they would restore again. I am a Gascon, and[1] there is no vice wherein I have less skill: I hate it somewhat more by complexion, than I accuse it by discourse. I do not so much as desire another man's goods. And although my countrymen be indeed somewhat more taxed with this fault than other provinces of France, yet have we seen of late days and that sundry times, men well born and of good parentage in other parts of France, in the hands of justice, and lawfully convicted of many most horrible robberies. I am of opinion that in regard of these debauches and lewd actions, fathers may, in some sort, be blamed, and that it is only long of them.

And if any shall answer me, as did once a gentleman of good worth and understanding, that he thriftily endeavoured to hoard up riches, to no other purpose, nor to have any use and commodity of them than to be honoured, respected and suingly sought unto by his friends and kinsfolk, and that age having bereaved him of all other forces, it was the only remedy he had left to maintain himself in authority with his household, and keep him from falling into contempt and disdain of all the world; and truly according to Aristotle, not only old age, but each imbecility, is the promoter, and motive of covetousness; that is something, but it is a remedy for an evil, whereof the birth should have been hindered, and breeding avoided. That father may

[1] Supply "yet."

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truly be said miserable, that holdeth the affection of his children tied unto him by no other means than by the need they have of his help, or want of his assistance, if that may be termed affection: a man should yield himself respectable by virtue and sufficiency, and amiable by his goodness, and gentleness of manners. The very cinders of so rich a matter have their value: so have the bones and relics of honourable men, whom we hold in respect and reverence. No age can be so crazed and drooping in a man that hath lived honourably but must needs prove venerable, and especially unto his children, whose minds ought so to be directed by the parents that reason and wisdom, not necessity and need, nor rudeness and compulsion, may make them know and perform their duty;

et errat longe, mea quidem sententia,
Qui imperium credat esse gravius aut stabilius,
Vi quod fit, quam illud quod amicitia adjungitur.
TER., *Adelph.*, Act I., sc. i., 39.

In mine opinion he doth much mistake,
Who, that command more grave, more firm doth take,
Which force doth get, than that which friendships make.

I utterly condemn all manner of violence in the education of a young spirit, brought up to honour and liberty. There is a kind of slavishness in churlish-rigour, and servility in compulsion; and I hold that that which cannot be compassed by reason, wisdom, and discretion, can never be attained by force and constraint. So was I brought up: they tell me, that in all my youth I never felt rod

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but twice, and that very lightly. And what education I have had myself, the same have I given my children. But such is my ill hap that they die all very young: yet hath Leonora my only daughter escaped this misfortune and attained to the age of six years, and somewhat more: for the conduct of whose youth, and punishment of her childish faults (the indulgence of her mother applying itself very mildly unto it) was never other means used but gentle words. And were my desire frustrate, there are divers other causes to take hold of, without reproving my discipline, which I know to be just and natural. I would also have been much more religious in that towards male-children, not born to serve as women, and of a freer condition. I should have loved to have stored their mind with ingenuity and liberty. I have seen no other effects in rods, but to make children's minds more remiss, or more maliciously headstrong.

Desire we to be loved of our children? Will we remove all occasions from them to wish our death? (although no occasion of so horrible and unnatural wishes can either be just or excusable) "nullum scelus rationem habet" (Livy): "no ill deed hath a good reason"; let us reasonably accommodate their life, with such things as are in our power. And therefore should not we marry so young that our age do in a manner confound itself with theirs. For this inconvenience doth unavoidably cast us into many difficulties and incumbrances. This I speak chiefly unto nobility, which is of an idle disposition, or loitering condition, and which (as we say) liveth only by her lands or rents: for else, where life

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standeth upon gain, plurality and company of children is an easeful furtherance of husbandry. They are as many new implements to thrive, and instruments to grow rich.

I was married at thirty years of age, and commend the opinion of thirty-five, which is said to be Aristotle's. Plato would have no man married before thirty, and hath good reason to scoff at them that will defer it till after fifty-five, and then marry, and condemneth their breed as unworthy of life and sustenance. Thales appointed the best limits, who by his mother, being instantly urged to marry while he was young, answered that it was not yet time; and when he came to be old, he said it was no more time. A man must refuse opportunity to every importunate action. The ancient Gauls deemed it a shameful reproach to have the acquaintance of a woman before the age of twenty years, and did especially recommend unto men that sought to be trained up in wars the careful preservation of their maiden-head until they were of good years, forsomuch as by losing it in youth, courages are thereby much weakened and greatly impaired, and by copulation with women, diverted from all virtuous action.

Ma or cogiunto à giovinetta sposa,
E lieto omai de' figli' era invilito
Ne gli affeti di padre et di marito.

TASSO, *Gerus. lib.* x., 39.

But now conjoin'd to a fresh-springing spouse,
Joy'd in his children, he was thought-abased,
In passions twixt a Sire, and husband placed.

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Muleasses, King of Thunes,[1] he whom the Emperor Charles the Fifth restored unto his own state again, was wont to upbraid his father's memory, for so dissolutely frequenting of women, terming him a sloven, effeminate, and a lustful engenderer of children. The Greek story doth note Iecus the Tarentine, Chryso, Astylus, Diopomus, and others, who to keep their bodies tough and strong for the service of the Olympic courses, wrestlings, and such bodily exercises, they did, as long as they were possessed with that care, heedfully abstain from all venerian acts, and touching of women. In a certain country of the Spanish Indies, no man was suffered to take a wife, before he were forty years old, and women might marry at ten years of age. There is no reason, neither is it convenient, that a gentleman of five-and-thirty years, should give place to his son, that is but twenty: for then is the father as seemly, and may as well appear, and set himself forward, in all manner of voyages of wars, as well by land as sea, and do his Prince as good service, in court, or elsewhere, as his son: he hath need of all his parts, and ought truly to impart them, but so that he forget not himself for others: and to such may justly that answer serve, which fathers have commonly in their mouths: "I will not put off my clothes before I be ready to go to bed."

But a father over-burdened with years, and crazed through sickness, and by reason of weakness and want of health, barred from the common society of

[1] Muley-Hassan, driven from the throne of Tunis by the celebrated corsair Kheir-ed-Din, or Barbarossa, and temporarily replaced upon it in 1535 by a victory of Emperor Charles V.

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men, doth both wrong himself, injure his, idly and to no use to hoard up, and keep close a great heap of riches, and deal of pelf. He is in state good enough, if he be wise, to have a desire to put off his clothes to go to bed, I will not say to his shirt, but to a good warm night-gown: as for other pomp and trash whereof he hath no longer use or need, he ought willingly to distribute and bestow them amongst those to whom by natural decree they ought to belong. It is reason he should have[1] the use, and bequeath the fruition of them, since nature doth also deprive him of them, otherwise without doubt there is both envy and malice stirring. The worthiest action, that ever the Emperor Charles the Fifth performed was this, in imitation of some ancients of his quality, that he had the discretion to know that reason commanded us to strip or shift ourselves when our clothes trouble and are too heavy for us, and that it is high time to go to bed, when our legs fail us. He resigned his means, his greatness, and kingdom to his son, at what time he found his former undaunted resolution to decay, and force to conduct his affairs to droop in himself, together with the glory he had thereby acquired.[2]

Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat.
HOR., i., *Ep.*, i., 8.

If you be wise, the horse grown old betimes cast off,
Lest he at last fall lame, falter, and breed a scoff.

[1] *Have.*—Substitute "leave."

[2] F. here slightly misapprehends M.'s meaning. Charles V. is praised for giving up the throne when he felt no longer strong enough to conduct affairs with his usual glory.

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This fault, for a man not to be able to know himself betimes, and not to feel the impuissance and extreme alteration that age doth naturally bring both to the body and the mind (which in mine opinion is equal, if the mind have but one half) hath lost the reputation of the most part of the greatest men in the world. I have in my days both seen and familiarly known some men of great authority, whom a man might easily discern to be strangely fallen from that ancient sufficiency, which I know by the reputation they had thereby attained unto in their best years. I could willingly for their honour's sake have wished them at home about their own business, discharged from all negotiations of the commonwealth and employments of war, that were no longer fit for them. I have sometimes been familiar in a gentleman's house, who was both an old man and a widower, yet lusty of his age. This man had many daughters marriageable, and a son grown to man's state, and ready to appear in the world; a thing that drew on and was the cause of great charges, and many visitations wherein he took but little pleasure, not only for the continual care he had to save, but more by reason of his age he had betaken himself to a manner of life far different from ours. I chanced one day to tell him somewhat boldly (as my custom is) that it would better beseem him to give us place, and resign his chief house to his son (for he had no other manor-house conveniently well furnished) and quietly retire himself to some farm of his, where no man might trouble him, or disturb his rest, since he could not otherwise avoid our importunity, seeing the condition of

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his children; who afterward followed my counsel, and found great ease by it.

It is not to be said that they have any thing given them by such a way of obligation, which a man may not recall again: I, that am ready to play such a part, would give over unto them the full possession of my house and enjoying of my goods, but with such liberty and limited condition, as if they should give me occasion, I might repent myself of my gift, and revoke my deed. I would leave the use and fruition of all unto them, the rather because it were no longer fit for me to wield the same. And touching the disposing of all matters in gross, I would reserve what I pleased unto myself. Having ever judged that it must be a great contentment to an aged father, himself to direct his children in the government of his household affairs, and to be able whilst himself liveth, to check and control the demeanours, storing them with instruction and advised counsel, according to the experience he hath had of them, and himself to address the ancient honour and order of his house in the hands of his successors, and that way warrant himself of the hopes he may conceive of their future conduct and after success. And to this effect, I would not shun their company. I would not be far from them, but, as much as the condition of my age would permit, enjoy and be a partner of their sports, mirths, and feasts. If I did not continually live amongst them (as I could not well without offending their meetings and hindering their recreation, by reason of the peevish forwardness of my age, and the trouble of my infirmities, and also without forcing their rules, and resisting

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the form of life I should then follow) I would at least live near them, in some corner of my house, not the best and fairest in show, but the most easeful and commodious; and not as some years since I saw a Dean of St. Hilaire of Poictiers, reduced by reason band the incommodity of his melancholy to such a continual solitariness that when I entered into his chamber he had never removed one step out of it in two and twenty years before: yet had all his faculties free and easy, only a rheum excepted that fell into his stomach. Scarce once a week would he suffer anybody to come and see him. He would ever be shut up in his chamber all alone, where no man should come, except a boy, who once a day brought him meat, and who might not tarry there, but as soon as he was in, must go out again. All his exercise was sometimes to walk up and down his chamber, and now and then read on some book (for he had some understanding of letters) but obstinately resolved to live and die in that course, as he did shortly after. I would endeavour, by a kind of civil demeanour and mild conversation, to breed and settle in my children a true-hearty-loving friendship and unfeigned good-will towards me; a thing easily obtained amongst well-born minds; for if they prove or be such surly-furious beasts, or given to churlish disobedience, as our age bringeth forth thousands, they must[1] as beasts be hated, as churls neglected, and as degenerates avoided.

I hate this custom, to forbid children to call their

[1] After *they must* Montaigne simply writes "be hated and avoided as such."

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fathers father, and to teach them another strange name, as of more reverence[1]: as if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authority. We call God Almighty by the name of Father, and disdain our children should call us so. I have reformed this fault in mine own household. It is also folly and injustice to deprive children, especially being of competent age, of their father's familiarity, and ever to show them a surly, austere, grim, and disdainful countenance, hoping thereby to keep them in awful fear and duteous obedience. For it is a very unprofitable proceeding, and which maketh fathers irksome unto children and which is worse, ridiculous. They have youth and strength in their hands, and consequently, the breath and favour of the world, and do with mockery and contempt receive these churlish fierce and tyrannical countenances from a man that hath no lusty blood left him, neither in his heart, nor in his veins; mere bugbears, and scarecrows, to scare birds withal. If it lay in my power to make myself feared, I had rather make myself beloved. There are so many sorts of defects in age, and so much impuissance, it is so subject to contempt, that the best purchase it can make is the good-will, love, and affection of hers.[2] Commandment and fear are no longer her weapons. I have known one whose youth had been very imperious and rough, but when he came to man's age, although he live in as good plight and health as may be, yet he chafeth, he scoldeth, he brawleth, he fighteth,

[1] In most families in the nobility and high bourgeoisie, children, in addressing the father, always used the word *Monsieur*.

[2] *I. e.*, of one's family. Montaigne writes: *des siens*.

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he sweareth, and biteth, as the most boisterous and tempestuous master of France, he frets and consumes himself with cark and care and vigilancy (all which is but a juggling and ground for his family to play upon, and cozen him the more). As for his goods, his garners, his cellars, his coffers, yea his purse, whilst himself keeps the keys of them close in his bosom, and under his boulster, as charily as he doth his eyes, others enjoy and command the better part of them. Whilst he pleaseth and flattereth himself with the niggardly sparing of his table, all goeth to wrack and is lavishly wasted in divers corners of his house, in play, in riotous spending, and in soothingly entertaining the accounts of tales of his vain chafing, foresight, and providing. Every man watcheth and keepeth sentinel against him; if any silly or heedless servant do by fortune apply himself unto it, he is presently made to suspect him: a quality on which age doth immediately bite of itself. How many times hath he vaunted and applauding himself told me of the strict orders of his house, of his good husbandry, of the awe he kept his household in, and of the exact obedience and regardful reverence he received of all his family, and how clear-sighted he was in his own business:

> *Ille solus nescit omnia.*
> TER., *Adel.*, Act IV., sc. ii., 9.
>
> Of all things none but he,
> Most ignorant must be.

I know no man that could produce more parts, both natural and artificial, fit to preserve his mastery,

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and to maintain his absoluteness, than he doth; yet is he clean fallen from them like a child. Therefore have I made choice of him, amongst many such conditions that I know, as most exemplary. It were a matter beseeming a scholastical question, whether it be better so, or otherwise. In his presence all things give place unto him. This vain course is ever left unto his authority, that he is never gainsaid. He is had in awe, he is feared, he is believed, he is respected his bellyful. Doth he discharge any boy or servant? he presently trusseth up his pack, then is he gone; but whither? only out of his sight, not out of his house. The steps of age are so slow, the senses so troubled, the mind so distracted, that he shall live and do his office a whole year in one same house and never be perceived. And when fit time or occasion serveth, letters are produced from far places, humbly suing, and pitifully complaining, with promises to do better and to amend, by which he is brought into favour again. Doth the master make any bargain or despatch that pleaseth not? it is immediately smothered and suppressed, soon after forging causes, and devising colourable excuses, to excuse the want of execution or answer. No foreign letters being first presented unto him, he seeth but such as are fit for his knowledge. If peradventure they come unto his hands, as he that trusteth some one of his men to read them unto him, he will presently devise what he thinketh good, whereby they often invent that such a one seemeth to ask him forgiveness that wrongeth him by his letter. To conclude, he never looks into his own business but by a disposed,

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designed, and as much as may be pleasing image, so contrived by such as are about him, because they will not stir up his choler, move his impatience, and exasperate his frowardness. I have seen under different forms, many long and constant, and of like effect economies.

It is ever proper unto women to be readily bent to contradict and cross their husbands. They will with might and main hand over head take hold of any colour to thwart and withstand them: the first excuse they meet with serves them as a plenary justification. I have seen some,[1] that would in gross steal from their[2] husbands, to the end (as they[3] told their[4] confessors) they[5] might give the greater alms. Trust you to such religious dispensations. They think no liberty to have, or managing to possess sufficient authority, if it come from their husbands' consent: they must necessarily usurp it, either by wily craft or main force, and ever injuriously, thereby to give it more grace and authority. As in my discourse, when it is against a poor old man, and for children, then take they hold of this title, and therewith gloriously serve their turn and passion, and as in a common servitude, easily usurp and monopolise against his government and domination. If they be men-children, tall, of good spirit and forward, then they presently suborn, either by threats, force or favour, both steward, bailiff, clerk,

[1] *Some.*—Substitute "one."
[2] *Their.*—Substitute "her."
[3] *They.*—Substitute "she."
[4] *Their.*—Substitute "her."
[5] *They.*—Substitute "she."

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receiver, and all the father's officers, and servant. Such as have neither wife nor children, do more hardly fall into this mischief: but yet more cruelly and unworthily. Old Cato was wont to say: "So many servants, so many enemies." Note whether according to the distance that was between the purity of his age and the corruption of our times, he did not forewarn us that wives, children, and servants are to us so many enemies. Well fits its decrepitude to store us with the sweet benefit of ignorance and unperceiving facility wherewith we are deceived. If we did yield unto it, what would become of us? Do we not see that even then, if we have any suits in law, or matters to be decided before judges, both lawyers and judges will commonly take part with, and favour our children's causes against us, as men interested in the same? And if I chance not to spy, or plainly perceive how I am cheated, cozened, and beguiled, I must of necessity discover in the end how I am subject and maybe cheated, beguiled and cozened. And shall the tongue of man ever be able to express the invaluable worth of a friend, in comparison of these civil bonds? The lively image and idea whereof, I perceive to be amongst beasts so unspotted, oh with what religion do I respect and observe the same! If others deceive me, yet do I not deceive myself, to esteem myself capable, and of power to look unto myself nor to trouble my brains to yield myself unto it. I do beware and keep myself from such treasons and cunny-catching in mine own bosom, not by an unquiet, and tumultuary curiosity, but rather by a diversion and resolution. When I hear the state of

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any one reported or discoursed of, I amuse not myself on him, but presently cast mine eyes on myself, and all my wits together, to see in what state I am, and how it goeth with me. Whatsoever concerneth him, the same hath relation to me. His fortunes forewarn me, and summon up my spirits that way. There is no day nor hour, but we speak that of others we might properly speak of ourselves, could we as well enfold, as we can unfold our consideration. And many authors do in this manner wound the protection of their cause, by over-rashly running against that which they take hold of, hurling such darts at their enemies that might with much more advantage be cast at them.

The Lord of Monluc, late one of the Lord Marshals of France, having lost his son, who died in the Island of Madeira, a worthy, forward and gallant young gentleman, and truly of good hope, amongst other griefs and regrets, did greatly move me to condole the infinite displeasure and heart's sorrow that he felt, inasmuch as he had never communicated and opened himself unto him; for, with his austere humour and continual endeavouring to hold a grim-stern-fatherly gravity over him, he had lost the means perfectly to find and thoroughly to know his son, and so to manifest unto him the extreme affection he bare him, and the worthy judgment he made of his virtue. "Alas" (was he wont to say "the poor lad saw never anything in me, but a

[1] Blaise de Montluc, or Monluc, born in 1501 or 1502, died in 1577, one of the most energetic French warriors of his time. His *Commentaires*, published for the first time in 1592, are a classic in French military literature.

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severe-surly-countenance, full of disdain, and haply was possessed with this conceit, that I could neither love nor esteem him according to his merits. Ay-me, to whom did I reserve, to discover that singular and loving affection, which in my soul I bare unto him? Was it not he that should have had all the pleasure and acknowledgment thereof? I have forced and tormented myself to maintain this vain mask, and have utterly lost the pleasure of his conversation, and therewithal his good will, which surely was but faintly cold towards me, forasmuch as he never received but rude entertainment of me, and never felt but a tyrannical proceeding in me towards him." I am of opinion, his complaint was reasonable and well grounded. For, as I know by certain experience, there is no comfort so sweet in the loss of friends as that our own knowledge or conscience tells us we never omitted to tell them everything, and expostulate all matters unto them, and to have had a perfect and free communication with them. Tell me, my good friend, am I the better or the worse by having a taste of it? Surely I am much the better. His grief doth both comfort and honour me. Is it not a religious and pleasing office of my life, forever to make the obsequies thereof? Can there be any pleasure worth this privation?

I do unfold and open myself as much as I can to mine own people and willingly declare the state of my will and judgment toward them, as commonly I do towards all men: I make haste to produce and present myself, for I would have no man mistake me in what part soever. Amongst

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other particular customs, which our ancient Gauls had, (as Cæsar affirmeth) this was one, that children never came before their fathers, nor were in any public assembly seen in their company, but when they began to bear arms; as if they would infer that then was the time fathers should admit them to their acquaintance and familiarity.

I have also observed another kind of indiscretion in some fathers of our times who during their own life, would never be induced to acquaint or impart unto their children that share or portion which by the law of nature they were to have in their fortunes: nay, some there are who after their death bequeath and commit the same authority over them and their goods unto their wives, with full power and law to dispose of them at their pleasure. And myself have known a gentleman, a chief officer of our crown, that by right and hope of possession (had he lived unto it) was to inherit about fifty thousand crowns a year good land, who at the age of more than fifty years fell into such necessity and want, and was run so far in debt that he had nothing left him, and as it is supposed died for very need; whilst his mother, in her extreme decrepitude, enjoyed all his lands and possessed all his goods, by virtue of his father's will and testament, who had lived very near fourscore years; a thing (in my conceit) no way to be commended, but rather blamed. Therefore do I think a man but little advantaged or bettered in estate, who is able to live of himself and is out of debt, especially if he have children[1] and goeth about to marry a wife that

[1] This clause is an addition by F.

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must have a great jointure out of his lands;[1] assuredly there is no other debt that brings more ruin unto houses than that. My predecessors[2] have commonly followed this counsel, and so have I, and all have found good by it. But those that dissuade us from marrying of rich wives lest they might prove over-disdainful and peevish or less tractable and loving are also deceived to make us neglect and forego a real commodity for so frivolous a conjecture. To an unreasonable woman it is all one cost to her whether they pass under one reason, or under another. They love to be where they are most wronged. Injustice doth allure them; as the honour of their virtuous actions enticeth the good. And by how much richer they are, so much more mild and gentle are they: as more willingly and gloriously chaste, by how much fairer they are.

Some colour of reason there is men should leave the administration of their goods and affairs unto mothers, whilst their children are not competent age or fit according to the laws to manage the charge of them: and ill hath their father brought them up if he cannot hope, these coming to years of discretion, they shall have no more wit, reason, and sufficiency than his wife, considering the weakness of their sex. Yet truly were it as much against nature, so to order things that mothers must wholly depend on their children's discretion. They ought largely and competently to be provided, wherewith to maintain their estate, according to the quality of their house and age: because need and

[1] Montaigne says: Who burdens him with a large dowry.

[2] *I. e.* the former owners of the domain of Montaigne.

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want is much more unseemly and hard to be endured in women, than in men: and children rather than mothers ought to be charged therewith.

In general, my opinion is that the best distribution of goods is, when we die, to distribute them according to the custom of the country. The laws have better thought upon them than we: and better it is to let them err in their election than for us rashly to hazard to fail in ours. They are not properly our own, since without us, and by civil prescription, they are appointed to certain successors. And albeit we have some further liberty, I think it should be a great and most apparent cause to induce us to take from one and bar him from that which Fortune hath allotted him and the common laws and Justice hath called him unto; and that against reason we abuse this liberty by suiting the same unto our private humours and frivolous fantasies. My fortune hath been good, inasmuch as yet it never presented me with any occasions that might tempt or divert my affections from the common and lawful ordinance. I see some towards whom it is but labour lost carefully to endeavour to do any good offices. A word ill taken defaceth the merit of ten years. Happy he that in this last passage is ready to soothe and applaud their will. The next action transporteth him,[1] not the best and most frequent offices, but the freshest and present work the deed. They are people that play with their wills and testaments, as with apples and rods, to gratify or chastise every action of those who pretend any interest thereunto. It is a matter

[1] Montaigne writes: *The action nearest to them prevails.*

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of over-long pursuit and of exceeding consequence, at every instance to be thus dilated, and wherein the wiser sort establish themselves once for all, chiefly respecting reason and public observance. We somewhat over-much take these masculine substitutions to heart, and propose a ridiculous eternity unto our names. We also over-weight such vain future conjectures, which infant-spirits give us. It might peradventure have been deemed[1] injustice, to displace me from out my rank, because I was the dullest, the slowest, the unwillingest, and most leaden-pated to learn my lesson or any good, that ever was, not only of all my brethren, but of all the children in my country, were the lesson concerning any exercise of the mind or body. It is folly to try any extraordinary conclusions upon the trust of their divinations, wherein we are so often deceived. If this rule may be contradicted, and the destinies corrected, in the choice they have made of our heirs, with so much more appearance may it be done in consideration of some remarkable and enormous corporal deformity; a constant and incorrigible vice; and, according to us great esteemers of beauty, a matter of important prejudice.

The pleasant dialogue of Plato the lawgiver[2] with his citizens, will much honour this passage. "Why then" (say they) "perceiving their end to approach, shall we not dispose of that which is our own, to whom and according as we please? Oh Gods, what cruelty is this? that it shall not be lawful for us to give or bequeath more or less according to our

[1] *Deemed.*—Substitute "an.'

[2] *I. e.*, Plato's lawgiver.

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fantasies to such as have served us, and taken pains with us in our sicknesses, in our age, and in our business?" To whom the lawgiver answereth in this manner: "My friends" (saith he) "who doubtless shall shortly die, it is a hard matter for you, both to know yourselves, and what is yours, according to the Delphic inscription: as for me, who am the maker of your laws, I am of opinion that neither yourselves are your own, nor that which you enjoy. And both you and your goods, past and to come, belong to your family; and moreover both your families and your goods are the Commonwealth's: wherefore, lest any flatterer, either in your age, or in time of sickness, or any other passion, should unadvisedly induce you to make any unlawful conveyance or unjust will and testament, I will look to you and keep you from it. But having an especial respect both to the universal interest of your city, and particular state of your houses, I will establish laws, and by reason make you perceive and confess that a particular commodity ought to yield to a public benefit. Follow that course merely, whereto human necessity doth call you. To me it belongeth, who have no more regard to one thing than to another, and who as much as I can, take care for the general, to have a regardful respect of that which you leave behind you."

But to return to my former discourse, methinks, we seldom see that woman born to whom the superiority or majesty over men is due, except the motherly and natural; unless it be for the chastisement of such as by some fond-febricitant humour have voluntarily submitted themselves unto

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them: but that doth nothing concern old women, of whom we speak here. It is the appearance of this consideration hath made us to frame, and willingly to establish this law (never seen elsewhere) that barreth women from the succession of this crown, and there are few principalities in the world, where it is not alleged, as well as here, by a likely and apparent reason, which authoriseth the same. But fortune hath given more credit unto it in some places, than in some other. It is dangerous to leave the dispensation of our succession unto their judgment, according to the choice they shall make of their children, which is most commonly unjust and fantastical. For the same unruly appetite, and distasted relish, or strange longings, which they have when they are great with child, the same have they at all times in their minds. They are commonly seen to affect the weakest, the simplest and most abject, or such (if they have any) that had more need to suckle.[1] For, wanting reasonable discourse to choose and embrace what they ought, they rather suffer themselves to be directed where nature's impressions are most single, as other creatures, which take no longer knowledge of their young ones, than they are sucking. Moreover, experience doth manifestly show unto us that the same natural affection to which we ascribe so much authority, hath but a weak foundation. For a very small gain we daily take mothers' own children from them and induce them to take charge of ours; do we not often procure them to bequeath[2] their child-

[1] Montaigne writes "that are still hanging around their necks."

[2] Montaigne writes *abandonerer*.

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ren to some fond, filthy, sluttish, and unhealthy nurse, to whom we would be very loath to commit ours, or to some brutish goat, not only forbidding them to nurse and feed their own children (what danger soever may betide them) but also to have any care of them, to the end they may the more diligently follow, and carefully attend the service of ours? Whereby we soon see through custom a certain kind of bastard-affection to be engendered in them, more vehement than the natural, and to be much more tender and careful for the welfare and preservation of other men's children, than for their own. And the reason why I have made mention of goats, is, because it is an ordinary thing round about me where I dwell, to see the country women, when they have not milk enough to feed their infants with their own breasts, to call for goats to help them. And myself have now two lackies waiting upon me, who except it were eight days never sucked other milk than goats'; they are presently to come at call, and give young infants suck, and become so well acquainted with their voice, that when they hear them cry, they run forthwith unto them. And if by chance they have any other child put to their teats than their nursling, they refuse and reject him, and so doth the child a strange goat. Myself saw one not long since, from whom the father took a goat, which he had sucked two or three days, because he had but borrowed it of one of his neighbours, who could never be induced to suck any other, whereby he shortly died, and as I verily think, of mere hunger. Beasts as well as we do soon alter, and

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easily bastardise their natural affection. I believe, that in that, which Herodotus reporteth of a certain province of Libia, there often followeth great error and mistaking. He saith, that men do indifferently use, and as it were in common frequent women; and that the child as soon as he is able to go, coming to[1] any solemn meetings and great assemblies, led by a natural instinct, findeth out his own father: where being[2] turned loose in the midst of the multitude, look what man the child doth first address his steps unto, and then go to him, the same is ever afterward reputed to be his right father.

Now if we shall duly consider this simple occasion of loving our children because we have begotten them, for which we call them our other selves, it seems there is another production coming from us, and which is of no less recommendation and consequence. For what we engender by the mind, the fruits of our courage, sufficiency, or spirit, are brought forth by a far more noble part, than the corporal, and are more our own. We are both father and mother together in this generation: such fruits cost us much dearer, and bring us more honour, and chiefly if they have any good or rare thing in them. For the value of our other children is much more theirs than ours; the share we have in them is but little. But of these all the beauty, all the grace, and all the worth is ours. And therefore do they represent and resemble us much more lively than others. Plato addeth moreover that these

[1] *Coming to . . . assemblies.*—Addition to the text.
[2] *Where being to . . . father.*—Addition to the text.

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are immortal issues and immortalise their fathers, yea, and defy them, as Lycurgus, Solon, and Minos. All histories being full of examples of this mutual friendship of fathers toward their children, I have not thought it amiss to set down some choice one of this kind. Heliodorus[1] that good Bishop of Tricca, loved rather to lose the dignity, profit and devotion of so venerable a prelateship than to forego his daughter, a young woman to this day commended for her beauty, but haply somewhat more curiously and wantonly pranked-up than beseemed the daughter of a churchman and a bishop, and of over-amorous behaviour. There was one Labienus in Rome, a man of great worth and authority, and amongst other commendable qualities, most excellent in all manner of learning, who (as I think) was the son of that great Labienus, chief of all the captains that followed and were under Cæsar in the wars against the Gauls, and who afterward taking great Pompey's part, behaved himself so valiantly and so constantly, that he never forsook him until Cæsar defeated him in Spain, This Labienus of whom I speak had many that envied his virtues; but above all (as it is likely) courtiers, and such as in his time were favoured of the Emperors, who hated his frankness, his fatherly humours, and distaste he bare still against tyranny, wherewith it may be supposed he had stuffed his

[1] Heliodorus, believed to have been bishop of Tricca (now Tricala) in Thessaly, is usually considered the author of the love romance of Theagenes and Chariclea. This work was very popular in France in the 16th and 17th centuries. In the former it was translated by Jacques Amyot and in the latter was dramatized in eight tragi-comedies by Alexandre Hardy.

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books and compositions. His adversaries vehemently pursued him before the Magistrate of Rome, and prevailed so far that many of his works which he had published were condemned to be burned. He was the first on whom this new example of punishment was put in practice, which after continued long in Rome, and was executed on divers others, to punish learning, studies, and writings with death and consuming fire. There were neither means enough nor matter sufficient of cruelty, unless we had intermingled amongst them things which nature had exempted from all sense and sufferance, as reputation, and the inventions of our mind, and except we communicated corporal mischiefs unto disciplines and monuments of the Muses; which loss Labienus could not endure, nor brook to survive those his dear, and highly-esteemed issues: and therefore caused himself to be carried, and shut up alive within his ancestors' monument, where, with a dreadless resolution, he at once provided both to kill himself and be buried together. It is hard to show any more vehement fatherly affection than that. Cassius Severus, a most eloquent man, and his familiar friend, seeing his books burned, exclaimed that by the same sentence he should therewithal be condemned to be burned alive, for he still bore and kept in mind what they contained in them. A like accident happened to Cremutius Cordus, who was accused to have commended Brutus and Cassius in his books. That base, servile, and corrupted Senate, and worthy of a far worse master than Tiberius, adjudged his writings to be consumed by fire, and

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he was pleased to accompany them in their death; for he pined away by abstaining from all manner of meat. That notable man, Lucan, being adjudged by that lewd varlet Nero to death, at the latter end of his life, when all his blood was well-nigh spent from out the veins of his arm, which by his physician he had caused to be opened to hasten his death, and that a chilling cold began to seize the uttermost parts of his limbs and approach his vital spirits, the last thing he had in memory was some of his own verses, written in his book of the Pharsalian wars, which with a distinct voice he repeated, and so yielded up the ghost, having those last words in his mouth. What was that but a kind, tender, and fatherly farewell which he took of his children? representing the last adieus and parting embracements, which at our death we give unto our dearest issues, and an effect of that natural inclination, which in that last extremity puts us in mind of those things which in our life-time we have held dearest and most precious?

Shall we imagine that Epicurus, who (as himself said) dying tormented with the extreme pain of the colic, had all his comfort in the beauty of the doctrine which he left behind him in the world, would have received as much contentment of a number of well-born, and better-bred children (if he had had any) as he did of the production of his rich compositions? And if it had been in his choice to leave behind him either a counterfeit, deformed, or ill-born child, or a foolish, trivial, and idle book, not only he, but all men in the world besides of like learning and sufficiency, would

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much rather have chosen to incur the former than the latter mischief. It might peradventure be deemed impiety in Saint Augustine (for example-sake) if on the one part one should propose unto him to bury all his books, whence our religion receiveth so much good, or to inter his children (if in case he had any) that he would not rather choose to bury his children, or the issue of his loins, than the fruits of his mind. And I wot not well, whether my self should not much rather desire to beget and produce a perfectly well-shaped, and excellently qualified infant by the acquaintance of the Muses, than by the copulation of my wife. Whatsoever I give to this, let the world allow of it as it please, I give it as purely and irrevocably as any man can give to his corporal children. That little good which I have done him,[1] is no longer in my disposition. He may know many things, that myself know no longer, and hold of me what I could not hold my self, and which (if need should require) I must borrow of him as of a stranger. If I be wiser than he, he is richer than I. There are few men given unto Poesie that would not esteem it for a greater honour to be the fathers of Virgil's *Æneidos* than of the goodliest boy in Rome, and that would not rather endure the loss of the one than the perishing of the other. For, according to Aristotle, of all workmen, the poet is principally the most amorous of his productions and conceited of his labours. It is not easy to be believed that Epaminondas, who wanted to leave some daughters behind him which unto all posterity should one day

[1] *I. e.*, the Muses' infant.

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highly honour their father (they were the two famous victories, which he had gained of the Lacedemonians) would ever have given his free consent to change them with the best-born, most gorgeous, and goodliest damsels of all Greece, or that Alexander and Cæsar did ever wish to be deprived of the greatness of their glorious deeds of war for the commodity to have children and heirs of their own bodies, how absolutely perfect and well accomplished so ever they might be. Nay, I make a great question, whether Phidias or any other excellent statuary, would as highly esteem and dearly love the preservation and successful continuance of his natural children as he would an exquisite and matchless-wrought image, that with long study and diligent care he had perfected according unto art. And as concerning those vicious and furious passions, which sometimes have inflamed some fathers to the love of their daughters, or mothers towards their sons, the very same and more partially earnest is also found in this other kind of child-bearing and alliance. Witness that which is reported of Pygmalion who having curiously framed a goodly statue of a most singularly beauteous woman, was so strange-fondly and passionately surprised with the lustful love of his own workmanship that the Gods through his raging importunity were fain in favour of him to give it life.

Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore
Subsidit digitis. OVID, *Metam.*, x., 283.

As he essayed it, th' ivory soft'ned much,
And (hardness left) did yield to finger's touch.

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CHAPTER XXIV

OF BOOKS

I MAKE no doubt but it shall often befall me to speak of things which are better and with more truth handled by such as are their crafts-masters. Here is simply an essay of my natural faculties, and no whit of those I have acquired. And he that shall tax me with ignorance shall have no great victory at my hands; for hardly could I give others reason for my discourses, that give none unto myself, and am not well satisfied with them. He that shall make search after knowledge, let him seek it where it is: there is nothing I profess less. These are but my fantasies, by which I endeavour not to make things known but myself. They may haply one day be known unto me, or have been at other times, according as fortune hath brought me where they were declared or manifested, but I remember them no more. And if I be a man of some reading, yet I am a man of no remembering. I conceive[1] no certainty, except it be to give notice how far the knowledge I have of it doth now reach. Let no man busy himself about the matters, but on the fashion I give them. Let that which I borrow be surveyed, and then tell

[1] Substitute *pledge*.

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me whether I have made good choice of ornaments, to beautify and set forth the invention which ever comes from me. For I make others to relate (not after mine own fantasy, but as it best falleth out) what I cannot so well express, either through unskill of language, or want of judgment. I number not my borrowings, but I weigh them; and if I would have made their number to prevail I would have had twice as many. They are all or almost all of so famous and ancient names that methinks they sufficiently name themselves without me. If in reasons, comparisons and arguments I transplant any into my soil, or confound them with mine own, I purposely conceal the author, thereby to bridle the rashness of these hasty censures that are so headlong cast upon all manner of compositions, namely young writings, of men yet living, and in vulgar,[1] that admit all the world to talk of them, and which seemeth to convince the conception and public design alike. I will have them to give Plutarch a bob upon mine own lips, and vex themselves, in wronging Seneca in me. My weakness must be hidden under such great credits. I will love him that shall trace, or unfeather me, I mean through clearness of judgment, and by the only distinction of the force and beauty of my[2] discourses. For myself who, for want of memory, am ever to seek how to try and refine them by the knowledge of their country,[3] know perfectly, by measuring mine own strength, that my soil is no

[1] *I. e.*, in vulgar speech, or in French, as opposed to Latin.
[2] *My.*—Substitute "the."
[3] *I. e.*, I. Know.

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way capable of some over-precious flowers that therein I find set, and that all the fruits of my increase could not make it amends. This am I bound to answer for, if I hinder myself, if there be either vanity, or fault in my discourses, that I perceive not or am not able to discern, if they be shown me. For many faults do often escape our eyes; but the infirmity of judgment consisteth in not being able to perceive them, when another discovereth them unto us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and we may have judgment without them: yea, the acknowledgment of ignorance is one of the best and surest testimonies of judgment that I can find. I have no other sergeant of band to marshal my rhapsodies than fortune; and look how my humours or conceits present themselves, so I shuffle them up. Sometimes they press out thick and threefold, and other times they come out languishing one by one. I will have my natural and ordinary pace seen as loose and as shuffling as it is. As I am, so I go on plodding. And besides, these are matters that a man may not be ignorant of, and rashly and casually to speak of them. I would wish to have a more perfect understanding of things, but I will not purchase it so dear as it cost. My intention is to pass the remainder of my life quietly, and not laboriously, in rest, and not in care. There is nothing I will trouble or vex myself about, no not for Science itself, what esteem soever it be of.

I do not search and toss over books, but for an honester recreation to please, and pastime to delight myself: or if I study, I only endeavour to find

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out the knowledge that teacheth or handleth the knowledge of myself, and which may instruct me how to die well, and how to live well.

Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus.
PROPERT. iv., *El.*, i., 70.

My horse must sweating run,
That this goal may be won.

If in reading I fortune to meet with any difficult points, I fret not myself about them, but after I have given them a charge or two, I leave them as I found them. Should I earnestly plod upon them I should lose both time and myself; for I have a skipping wit. What I see not at the first view, I shall less see it, if I opinionate myself upon it. I do nothing without blitheness; and an over-obstinate continuation and plodding contention doth dazzle, dull and weary[1] the same: my sight is thereby confounded and diminished. I must therefore withdraw it, and at fits go to it again; even as to judge well of the lustre of scarlet we are taught to cast our eyes over it, in running it over by divers glances, sodden glimpses, and reiterated reprisings. If one book seems tedious unto me, I take another, which I follow not with any earnestness, except it be at such hours as I am idle or that I am weary with doing nothing. I am not greatly affected to new books, because ancient authors are in my judgment more full and pithy: nor am I much addicted to Greek books, forasmuch as my understanding cannot well rid his work with a childish and apprentice intelligence.

[1] The same, substitute "my understanding."

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Amongst modern books merely pleasant, I esteem Boccaccio his *Decameron*, Rabelais, and the kisses of John the Second (if they may be placed under this title) worth the pains taken to read them. As for *Amadis*[1] and such like trash of writings, they had never the credit so much as to allure my youth to delight in them. This I will say more, either boldly or rashly, that this old and heavy-paced mind of mine, will no more be pleased with Ariosto, or tickled with good Ovid; his facility, and quaint inventions, which heretofore have so ravished me, they can nowadays scarcely entertain me. I speak my mind freely of all things, yea of such as peradventure exceed my sufficiency, and that no way I hold to be of my jurisdiction. What my conceit is of them is also to manifest the proportion of my insight, and not the measure of things. If at any time I find myself distasted of Plato's *Axiochus*, as of a forceless work, due regard had to such an Author, my judgment doth nothing believe itself: it is not so fond-hardy or self-conceited that it durst dare to oppose itself against the authority of so many other famous ancient judgments which he[2] reputeth his regents and masters, and with whom he had rather err. He chafeth with, and condemneth himself, either

[1] In 1519 Garcia Ordonez de Montalto published the Spanish version of the celebrated romance of chivalry, *Amadis de Gaula*, a Portuguese version of which had been composed already in the previous century. In Montaigne's time two editions of a French translation of the Spanish text were in existence, one published in 1540–1546, in six volumes, the other, in twenty-two volumes, published in 1675.

[2] *He, i. e.* my judgment.

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to rely on the superficial sense, being unable to pierce into the centre or to view the thing by some false lustre. He is pleased only to warrant himself from trouble and unruliness: as for weakness he acknowledgeth and ingeniously avoweth the same. He thinks to give a just interpretation to the appearances which his conception presents unto him, but they are shallow and imperfect. Most of Æsop's fables have divers senses, and several interpretations: those which mythologise them, choose some kind of colour well-suiting with the fable; but for the most part, it is no other than the first and superficial gloss: there are others more quick, more sinewy, more essential and more internal, into which they could never penetrate; and thus think I with them.

But to follow my course: I have ever deemed that in Poesy, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace, do doubtless by far hold the first rank: and especially Virgil in his *Georgics*, which I esteem to be the most accomplished piece of work of Poesy: in comparison of which one may easily discern, that there are some passages in the *Æneidos*, to which the author (had he lived) would no doubt have given some review or correction: the fifth book whereof is (in my mind) the most absolutely perfect. I also love Lucan and willingly read him, not so much for his style as for his own worth and truth of his opinion and judgment. As for good Terence, I allow the quaintness and grace of his Latin tongue, and judge him wonderful conceited and apt, lively to represent the motions and passions of the mind, and the condition of our

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manners: our actions make me often remember him. I can never read him so often but still I discover some new grace and beauty in him. Those that lived about Virgil's time complained that some would compare Lucretius unto him. I am of opinion that verily it is an unequal comparison; yet can I hardly assure myself in this opinion whensoever I find myself entangled in some notable passage of Lucretius. If they were moved at this comparison what would they say now of the fond hardy, and barbarous stupidity of those which nowadays compare Ariosto unto him? Nay what would Ariosto say of it himself?

O sæclum insipiens et infacetum.

CATUL., *Epig.*, xliii., 8.

O age that hath no wit,
And small conceit in it.

I think our ancestors had also more reason to cry out against those that blushed not to equal Plautus unto Terence (who makes more show to be a gentleman) than Lucretius unto Virgil. This one thing doth greatly advantage the estimation and preferring of Terence, that the father of the Roman eloquence of men of his quality doth so often make mention of him, and the censure, which the chief judge of the Roman poets giveth of his companion. It hath often come into my mind how such as in our days give themselves to composing of comedies (as the Italians who are very happy in them) employ three or four arguments of Terence and Plautus to make up one of theirs. In one only comedy they will huddle up five or six of Boccaccio's tales. That

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which makes them so to charge themselves with matter is the distrust they have of their own sufficiency, and that they are not able to undergo so heavy a burden with their own strength. They are forced to find a body on which they may rely and lean themselves, and wanting matter of their own wherewith to please us, they will have the story or tale to busy and amuse us: whereas in my Author it is clean contrary: the elegancies, the perfections, and ornaments of his manner of speech make us neglect and lose the longing for his subject. His quaintness and grace do still retain us to him. He is everywhere pleasantly conceited,

> *Liquidus puroque simillimus amni.*
> HOR., ii., *Epist.*, ii., 120.
> So clearly-neat, so neatly-clear,
> As he a fine-pure river were.

and doth so replenish our mind with his graces that we forget those of the fable. The same consideration draws me somewhat further. I perceive that good and ancient poets have shunned the affectation and inquest not only of fantastical, new-fangled, Spagniolised, and Petrarchistical elevations, but also of more sweet and sparing inventions, which are the ornament of all the poetical works of succeeding ages. Yet is there no competent judge, that findeth them wanting in those ancient ones, and that doth not much more admire that smoothly equal neatness, continued sweetness, and flourishing comeliness of Catullus his *Epigrams*, than all the sharp quips, and witty girds, wherewith Martial doth whet and embellish the con-

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clusions of his. It is the same reason I spoke of erewhile, as Martial of himself. *Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat* (MART., *Pref.* viii.). *He needed the less work with his wit, in place whereof matter came in supply.* The former without being moved or pricked cause themselves to be heard loud enough: they have matter to laugh at everywhere, and need not tickle themselves; whereas these must have foreign help: according as they have less spirit, they must have more body. They leap on horseback, because they are not sufficiently strong in their legs to march on foot. Even as in our dances, those base-conditioned men that keep dancing-schools, because they are unfit to represent the port and decency of our nobility, endeavour to get commendation by dangerous lofty tricks and other strange tumbler-like frisks and motions. And some ladies make a better show of their countenances in those dances wherein are divers changes, cuttings, turnings, and agitations of the body, than in some dances of state and gravity, where they need but simply to tread a natural measure, represent an unaffected carriage, and their ordinary grace; and as I have also seen some excellent lourdans, or clowns attired[1] in their ordinary work-day clothes, and with a common homely countenance, afford us all the pleasure that may be had from their art, prentices and learners that are not of so high a form, to besmear their faces, to disguise themselves, and in motions to counterfeit strange visages, and antics, to induce us to

[1] Montaigne writes *badins excellents*.

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laughter. This my conception is nowhere better discerned, than in the comparison between Virgil's *Æneidos* and *Orlando Furioso*. The first is seen to soar aloft with full-spread wings, and with so high and strong a pitch, ever following his point; the other faintly to hover and flutter from tale to tale, and as it were skipping from bough to bough, always distrusting his own wings, except it be for some short flight, and for fear his strength and breath should fail him, to sit down at every fields-end.

Excursusque breves tentat.—VIRG., *Georg.*, iv., 194.

Out-lopes sometimes he doth assay,
But very short, and as he may.

Lo here then, concerning this kind of subjects, what authors please me best.

As for my other lesson, which somewhat more mixeth profit with pleasure, whereby I learn to range my opinions, and address my conditions, the books that serve me thereunto are Plutarch (since he spake French,[1]) and Seneca; both have this excellent commodity for my humour that the knowledge I seek in them is there so scatteringly and loosely handled that whosoever readeth them is not tied to plod long upon them, whereof I am incapable. And so are Plutarch's little works, and Seneca's *Epistles*, which are the best and most profitable parts of their writings. It is no great matter to draw me to them, and I leave them where I list. For they succeed not, and depend not one on another. Both jump and suit together, in most true and profitable opinions: and fortune brought

[1] *I. e.*, since the publication of Amyot's translations.

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them both into the world in one age. Both were tutors unto two Roman Emperors: both were strangers, and came from far countries[1]; both rich and mighty in the Commonwealth, and in credit with their masters. Their instruction is the prime and cream of Philosophy, and presented with a plain, unaffected, and pertinent fashion. Plutarch is more uniform and constant, Seneca more waving and diverse. This doth labour, force, and extend himself, to arm and strengthen virtue against weakness, fear, and vicious desires; the other seemeth nothing so much to fear their force or attempt, and in a manner scorneth to hasten or change his pace about them, and to put himself upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are platonic, gentle and accommodable to civil society: Seneca's stoical and epicurean, further from common use, but in my conceit, more proper, particular, and more solid. It appeareth in Seneca, that he somewhat inclineth and yieldeth to the tyranny of the Emperors which were in his days; for I verily believe it is with a forced judgment he condemneth the cause of those noble-minded murderers of Cæsar; Plutarch is everywhere free and open-hearted; Seneca, full-fraught with points and sallies; Plutarch stuffed with matters. The former doth move and inflame you more; the latter, content, please, and pay you better: This doth guide you, the other drive you on.

[1]Seneca, born in Spain, in 2, 3, or 4 A.D., died, 65 A.D., tutor to Nero. Plutarch, born in Greece 46 or 48 A.D., died at an advanced age, date of death unknown. Erroneously believed, in Montaigne's time, to have been tutor to Emperor Trajan.

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As for Cicero, of all his works those that treat of Philosophy (namely, moral) are they which best serve my turn and square with my intent. But boldly to confess the truth, (for, since the bars of impudence were broken down, all curbing is taken away) his manner of writing seemeth very tedious unto me, as doth all such like stuff. For his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies consume the greatest part of his works; whatsoever quick, witty, and pithy conceit is in him is surcharged and confounded by those his long and farfetched preambles. If I bestow but one hour in reading him, which is much for me; and let me call to mind what substance or juice I have drawn from him, for the most part I find nothing but wind and ostentation in him: for he is not yet come to the arguments which make for his purpose and reasons that properly concern the knot or pith I seek after. These logical and Aristotelian ordinances are not available for me, who only endeavour to become more wise and sufficient, and not more witty or eloquent. I would have one begin with the last point: I understand sufficiently what death and voluptuousness are: let not a man busy himself to anatomise them. At the first reading of a book, I seek for good and solid reasons that may instruct me how to sustain their assaults. It is neither grammatical subtilties nor logical quiddities, nor the witty contexture of choice words, or arguments and syllogisms, that will serve my turn. I like those discourses that give the first charge to the strongest part of the doubt; his are but flourishes, and languish everywhere. They are good for schools,

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at the bar, or for orators and preachers, where we may slumber: and though we wake a quarter of an hour after we may find and trace him soon enough. Such a manner of speech is fit for those judges that a man would corrupt by hook or crook, by right or wrong, or for children and the common people unto whom a man must tell all and see what the event will be. I would not have a man go about and labour by circumlocutions[1] to induce and win me to attention, and that (as our heralds or criers do) they shall ring out their words. Now[2] hear me: "Now listen," or "Ho yes."[3] The Romans in their religion were wont to say, *Hoc age;* which in ours we say, *Sursum corda.* These are so many lost words for me. I come ready prepared from my house. I need no allurement nor sauce: my stomach is good enough to digest raw meat: and whereas with these preparatives and flourishes, or preambles, they think to sharpen my taste or stir my stomach, they cloy and make it wallowish. Shall the privilege of times excuse me from this sacrilegious boldness, to deem Plato's *Dialogues* to be as languishing, by over-filling and stuffing his matter? and to bewail the time that a man who had so many thousands of things to utter spends about so many, so long, so vain, and idle interlocutions, and preparatives? My ignorance shall better excuse me in that I see nothing in the beauty of his language. I generally inquire after books that use

[1] *By circumlocutions*, addition.

[2] Omit "their words. Now. . . "

[3] The French text has: *Or oyez*, Now hear, the words still used in some English courts.

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sciences, and not after such as institute them. The two first, and Pliny, with others of their rank, have no *Hoc age* in them, they will have to do with men that have forewarned themselves; or if they have, it is a material and substantial *Hoc age*, and that hath his body apart. I likewise like to read the *Epistles* and[1] *ad Atticum*, not only because they contain a most ample instruction of the history and affairs of his times, but much more because in them I descry his private humours. For (as I have said elsewhere) I am wonderfully curious to discover and know the mind, the soul, the genuine disposition and natural judgment of my authors. A man ought to judge their sufficiency and not their customs, nor them by the show of their writings, which they set forth on this world's theatre. I have sorrowed a thousand times that ever we lost the book that Brutus wrote of virtue. Oh, it is a goodly thing to learn the theory of such as understand the practice well. But forasmuch as the sermon is one thing and the preacher another, I love as much to see Brutus in Plutarch as in himself: I would rather make choice to know certainly what talk he had in his tent with some of his familiar friends the night foregoing the battle than the speech he made the morrow after to his army, and what he did in his chamber or closet than what in the Senate or market-place. As for Cicero, I am of the common judgment, that besides learning there was no exquisite excellency in him: he was a good citizen, of an honest, gentle nature, as are commonly fat and burly men; for so was he: but to speak truly of him, full of ambitious

[1] Omit "and."

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vanity and remiss niceness. And I know not well how to excuse him in that he deemed his Poesie worthy to be published. It is no great imperfection to make bad verses, but it is an imperfection in him that he never perceived how unworthy they were of the glory of his name. Concerning his eloquence, it is beyond all comparison, and I verily believe that none shall ever equal it. Cicero the younger, who resembled his father in nothing but in name, commanding in Asia, chanced one day to have many strangers at his board, and amongst others, one Cæstius sitting at the lower end, as the manner is to thrust in at the great men's tables: Cicero inquired of one of his men what he was, who told him his name, but he, dreaming on other matters, and having forgotten what answer his man made him, asked him his name twice or thrice more: the servant, because he would not be troubled to tell him one thing so often, and by some circumstance make him to know him better: "It is," said he, "the same Cæstius of whom some have told you that in respect of his own maketh no account of your father's eloquence." Cicero, being suddenly moved, commanded the said poor Cæstius to be presently taken from the table and well whipped in his presence: lo here an uncivil and barbarous[1] host. Even amongst those which (all things considered) have deemed his eloquence matchless and incomparable others there have been who have not spared to note some faults in it: as great Brutus said that it was an eloquence broken, halting, and disjointed, *fractam et elumbem:* "incoherent and sinewless." Those orators that lived

[1] *And barbarous.*—Addition to the text.

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about his age reproved also in him the curious care he had of a certain long cadence, at the end of his clauses, and noted these words, *Esse videatur*, which he so often useth. As for me, I rather like a cadence that falleth shorter, cut like iambics: yet doth he sometimes confound his numbers; but it is seldom: I have especially observed this one place. *Ego vero me minus diu senem esse mallem, quam esse senem, antequam essem* (CIC. *De Senect.*). "But I had rather not be an old man so long as I might be, than to be old before I should be."

Historians are my right hand, for they are pleasant and easy: and therewithal, the man with whom I desire generally to be acquainted, may more lively and perfectly be discovered in them, than in any other composition: the variety and truth of his inward conditions, in gross and by retail, the diversity of the means of his collection and composing, and of the accidents that threaten him. Now, those that write of men's lives, forasmuch as they amuse and busy themselves more about counsels than events, more about that which cometh from within than that which appeareth outward, they are fittest for me: and that's the reason why Plutarch above all in that kind, doth best please me. Indeed, I am not a little grieved that we have not a dozen of[1] Laertii, or that he is not more known,[2] or better understood: for, I am no less curious to know the fortunes and lives of these great masters

[1] Diogenes Laertius, Greek writer of the third century A.D., who wrote about the *Lives, doctrines, and maxims of illustrious philosophers.*

[2] *Known.*—Substitute "bulky." The French text has *estendu.*

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of the world, than to understand the diversity of their decrees and conceits. In this kind of study of history, a man must, without distinction, toss and turn over all sorts of authors, both old and new, both French and others,[1] if he will learn the things they do diversely treat of. But methinks that Cæsar above all doth singularly deserve to be studied, not only for the understanding of the history, as of himself; so much perfection and excellence is there in him more than in others, although Sallust be reckoned one of the number. Verily I read that author with a little more reverence and respect, than commonly men read profane and humane works: sometimes considering him by his actions, and wonders of his greatness, and other times weighing the purity and inimitable polishing and elegance of his tongue, which (as Cicero saith) hath not only exceeded all historians, but haply Cicero himself: with such sincerity in his judgment, speaking of his enemies, that except the false colours wherewith he goeth about to cloak his bad cause and the corruption and filthiness of his pestilent ambition, I am persuaded there is nothing in him to be found fault with: and[2] that he hath been over-sparing to speak of himself: for so many notable and great things could never be executed by him, unless he had put more of his own unto them than he setteth down.

I love those historians that are either very simple or most excellent. The simple who have nothing of

[1] *And others.*—F. translates thus the French word *baragouins*. A better translation would be "Writing either in French or in jargon."

[2] *And.*—Substitute "except."

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their own to add unto the story, and have but the care and diligence to collect whatsoever come unto their knowledge, and sincerely and faithfully to register all things, without choice or culling, by the naked truth leave our judgment more entire, and better satisfied. Such amongst others (for example's sake) plain and well-meaning Froissard, who in his enterprise, hath marched with so free and genuine a purity that, having committed some oversight, he is neither ashamed to acknowledge nor afraid to correct the same, wheresoever he hath either notice or warning of it: and who representeth unto us the diversity of the news then current, and the different reports that were made unto him. The subject of a history should be[1] naked, bare, and formless; each man according to his capacity or understanding may reap commodity out of it. The curious and most excellent have the sufficiency to call and choose that which is worthy to be known, and may select of two relations that which is most likely: of the condition of Princes and of their humours, thereby they conclude their counsels, and attribute convenient words unto them: they have reason to assume authority unto them to direct and shape our belief unto theirs. But truly that belongs not to many. Such as are between both (which is the most common fashion) it is they that spoil all; they will needs chew our meat for us, and take upon them a law to judge and by consequence to square and incline the story according to their fantasy; for, where the judgment bendeth

[1] *The subject of a history should be.*—Substitute "This is the material of history."

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one way, a man cannot choose but wrest and turn his narration that way. They undertake to choose things worthy to be known, and now and then conceal either a word or a secret action from us which would much better instruct us: omitting such things as they understand not, as incredible: and haply such matters as they know not how to declare, either in good Latin or tolerable French. Let them boldly install their eloquence, and discourse: let them censure at their pleasure, but let them also give us leave to judge after them: and let them neither alter nor dispense by their abridgements and choice anything belonging to the substance of the matter; but let them rather send it pure and entire with all her dimensions unto us.

Most commonly (as chiefly in our age) this charge of writing histories is committed unto base, ignorant, and mechanical kind of people, only for this consideration that they can speak well; as if we sought to learn the grammar of them; and they have some reason, being only hired to that end, and publishing nothing but their tittle-tattle, to aim at nothing else so much. Thus with store of choice and quaint words, and wire-drawn phrases they huddle up, and make a hodge-pot of a laboured contexture of the reports which they gather in the market-places, or such other assemblies. The only good histories are those that are written by such as commanded or were employed themselves in weighty affairs, or that were partners in the conduct of them, or that at least have had the fortune to manage others of like quality. Such in a manner are all the Grecians and Romans. For,

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many eye-witnesses having written of one same subject (as it happened in those times, when greatness and knowledge did commonly meet) if any fault or oversight have passed them, it must be deemed exceeding light, and upon some doubtful accident. What may a man expect of a physician's hand, that discourseth of war, or of a bare scholar treating of Princes' secret designs? If we shall but note the religion which the Romans had in that, we need no other example; Asinius Pollio[1] found some mistaking or oversight in Cæsar's *Commentaries*, whereinto he was fallen, only because he could not possibly oversee all things with his own eyes, that happened in his army, but was fain to rely on the reports of particular men who often related untruths unto him, or else because he had not been curiously advertised and distinctly informed by his lieutenants and captains of such matters as they in his absence had managed or effected. Whereby may be seen, that nothing is so hard, or so uncertain to be found out, as the certainty of a truth, since no man can put any assured confidence concerning the truth of a battle, neither in the knowledge of him that was general, or commanded over it, nor in the soldiers that fought, of anything that hath happened amongst them except, after the manner of a strict point of law, the several witnesses are brought and examined face to face, and that all matters be nicely and thoroughly sifted by the objects and trials of the success of every accident. Verily the knowledge we have of our own affairs is much

[1] Known as a friend of Emperor Augustus.

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more barren and feeble. But this hath sufficiently been handled by Bodin,[1] and agreeing with my conception.

Somewhat to aid the weakness of my memory, and to assist her great defects, for it hath often been my chance to light upon books which I supposed to be new and never to have read, which I had notwithstanding diligently read and run over many years before, and all bescribbled with my notes, I have awhile since accustomed myself, to note at the end of my book (I mean such as I purpose to read but once) the time I made an end to read it, and to set down what censure or judgment I gave of it; that so, it may at least, at another time represent unto my mind, the air and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading him.

I will here set down the copy of some of mine annotations, and especially what I noted upon my Guicciardini about ten years since: (For what language soever my books speak unto me, I speak unto them in mine own.) "He is a diligent historiographer, and from whom in my conceit, a man may as exactly learn the truth of such affairs as passed in his time as of any other writer whatsoever: and the rather because himself hath been an actor of most part of them, and in very honourable place. There is no sign or appearance that ever he disguised or coloured any matter, either through

[1] Jean Bodin, 1520–1596, prolific writer of the sixteenth century. His most celebrated work, *De la République*, was published in French in 1576, and translated into Latin in 1586. Bodin deserves to be considered a forerunner of Montesquieu.

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hatred, malice, favour, or vanity; whereof the free and impartial judgments he giveth of great men and namely of those by whom he had been advanced or employed in his important charges, as of Pope Clement the seventh, beareth undoubted testimony. Concerning the parts wherewith he most goeth about to prevail which are his digressions and discourses, many of them are very excellent, and enriched with fair ornaments, but he hath too much pleased himself in them: for, endeavouring to omit nothing that might be spoken, having so full and large a subject, and almost infinite, he proveth somewhat languishing, and giveth a taste of a kind of scholastic tedious babbling. Moreover, I have noted this, that of so several and divers arms, successes, and effects he judgeth of, of so many and variable motives, alterations, and counsels, that he relateth, he never referreth any one unto virtue, religion, or conscience: as if they were all extinguished and banished the world: and of all actions, how glorious soever in appearance they be of themselves, he doth ever impute the cause of them to some vicious and blameworthy occasion, or to some commodity and profit. It is impossible to imagine, that amongst so infinite a number of actions whereof he judgeth some one have not been produced and compassed by way of reason. No corruption could ever possess men so universally but that some one must of necessity escape the contagion; which makes me to fear he hath had some distaste or blame in his passion, and it hath haply fortuned that he hath judged or esteemed of others according to himself."

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In my Philip de Comines, there is this: "In him you shall find a pleasing, sweet, and gently gliding speech, fraught with a purely sincere simplicity, his narration pure and unaffected, and wherein the author's unspotted good meaning doth evidently appear, void of all manner of vanity or ostentation speaking of himself, and free from all affectation or envy speaking of others: his discourses and persuasions, accompanied more with a well-meaning zeal and mere verity than with any laboured and exquisite sufficiency, and although, with gravity and authority, representing a man well-born, and brought up in high negotiations."

Upon the memories and history of Monsieur du Bellay[1]: "It is ever a well-pleasing thing to see matters written by those, that have essayed how and in what manner they ought to be directed and managed: yet can it not be denied, but that in both these lords,[2] there will manifestly appear a great declination from a free liberty of writing, which clearly shineth in ancient writers of their kind: as in the Lord of Joinville, familiar unto Saint Louis, Eginard, Chancellor unto Charlemaine, and of more fresh memory in Philip de Comines. This is rather a declamation or pleading for King Francis against the Emperor Charles the fifth than a history. I will not believe they have altered or changed anything concerning the generality of matters, but rather to wrest and turn the judgment

[1] Martin du Bellay, not his relative, the poet Joachim du Bellay.

[2] Martin du Bellay and his brother Guillaume de Langey, joint authors of the work here commented upon.

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of the events, many times against reason, to our advantage, and to omit whatsoever supposed to be doubtful or ticklish in their master's life: they have made profession of it, witness the recoilings of the Lords of Montmorency and Biron, which therein are forgotten; and which is more, you shall not so much as find the name of the lady[1] of Estampes mentioned at all. A man may sometimes colour, and haply hide secret actions, but absolutely to conceal that which all the world knoweth, and especially such things as have drawn on public effects, and of such consequence, it is an inexcusable defect, or as I may say unpardonable oversight. To conclude, whosoever desireth to have perfect information and knowledge of King Francis the first and of the things happened in his time, let him address himself elsewhere, if he will give any credit unto me. The profit he may reap here, is by the particular deduction of the battles and exploits of war wherein these gentlemen were present, some privy conferences, speeches, or secret actions of some princes that then lived, and the practices managed or negotiations directed by the Lord of Langeay in whom doubtless are very many things well worthy to be known, and diverse discourses not vulgar."

[1] The celebrated Anne de Pisseleu, the mistress of King Francis I.

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CHAPTER XXV

OF THE LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE

IT is ordinarily seen how good intentions, being managed without moderation, thrust men into most vicious effects. In this controversy, by which France is at this instant molested with civil wars, the best and safest side, is no doubt that which maintaineth both the ancient religion and policy of the country. Nevertheless, amongst the honest men that follow it (for my meaning is not to speak of those who use them as a colour, either to exercise their particular revenges, or to supply their greedy avarice, or to follow the favour of princes: but of such as do it with a true zeal toward their religion and an unfeigned holy affection to maintain the peace and uphold the state of their country) of those I say, divers are seen whom passion thrusts out of the bounds of reason, and often forceth them to take and follow unjust, violent, and rash counsels.

Certain it is that when first our religion began to gain authority with the laws, its zeal armed many against all sorts of pagan books, whereof the learned sort have a great loss. My opinion is, that this disorder hath done more hurt to learning than all the Barbarian flames. Cornelius Tacitus is a

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sufficient testimony of it: for, howbeit the Emperor Tacitus, his kinsman, had by express appointment stored all the libraries in the world with it, notwithstanding, one only entire copy could not escape the curious search of those who sought to abolish it, by reason of five or six vain clauses, contrary to our belief.

They have also had this, easily to afford false commendations to all the Emperors that made for us, and universally to condemn all the actions of those which were our adversaries, as may plainly be seen in Julian the Emperor, surnamed the Apostate; who in truth was a notable, rare man, as he whose mind was lively endowed with the discourses of Philosophy, unto which he professed to conform all his actions; and truly there is no kind of virtue whereof he hath not left most notable examples. In chastity (whereof the whole course of his life giveth apparent testimony) a like example unto that of Alexander and Scipio is read of him, which is, that of many wonderful fair captive ladies brought before him, being even in the very prime of his age (for he was slain by the Parthians about the age of one and thirty years) he would not see one of them. Touching justice, himself would take the pains to hear all parties: and although for curiosity sake he would inquire of such as came before him what religion they were of, nevertheless the enmity he bore to ours did no whit weigh down the balance. Himself made sundry good laws, and revoked diverse subsidies and impositions his predecessors before him had received.

We have two good historians as eye-witnesses of

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his actions. One of which (who is[1] Marcellinus) in sundry places of his History bitterly reproveth this ordinance of his, by which he forbade schools, and interdicted all Christian rhetoricians, and grammarians to teach; saying, he wished this his action might be buried under silence. It is very likely if he had done anything else more sharp or severe against us he would not have forgot it, as he that was well affected to our side. He was indeed very severe against us, yet not a cruel enemy. For our people themselves report this history of him, that walking one day about the city of Calcedon, Maris, Bishop thereof, durst call him wicked and traitor to Christ, to whom he did no other thing, but answered thus: Go, wretched man, weep and deplore the loss of thine eyes; to whom the Bishop replied, I thank Jesus Christ, that he hath deprived me of my sight, that so I might not view thy impudent face, affecting thereby (as they say) a kind of philosophical patience. So it is, this part cannot be referred to the cruelties which he is said to have exercised against us. He was (saith[2] Eutropius my other testimony) an enemy unto Christianity, but without shedding of blood.

But to return to his justice, he can be accused of nothing but of the rigours he used in the beginning of his Empire against such as had followed the faction of Constantius his predecessor. Concerning sobriety, he ever lived a soldier's kind of life, and

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, Latin historian of the fourth century A.D.

[2] Eutropius, Latin writer of the fourth century A.D. His *Breviarium ab Urbe Condita* remained for a long time one of the most popular books of history.

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in time of peace would feed no otherwise than one who prepared and inured himself to the austerity of war. Such was his vigilance that he divided the night into three or four parts the least of which he allotted unto sleep; the rest he employed in visiting the state of his army and his guards, or in study; for, amongst other his rare qualities, he was most excellent in all sorts of learning. It is reported of Alexander the Great that being laid down to rest, fearing lest sleep should divert him from his thoughts and studies, he caused a basin to be set near his bedside, and holding one of his hands out, with a brazen ball in it, that if sleep should surprise him, loosing his fingers' ends, the ball falling into the basin, might with the noise rouse him from out his sleep. This man had a mind so bent to what he undertook, and by reason of his singular abstinence so little troubled with vapours, that he might well have passed[1] this device. Touching military sufficiency, he was admirable in all parts belonging to a great captain. So was he almost all his lifetime in continual exercise of war, and the greater part with us in France against the Alemans and French.[2] We have no great memory of any man, that either hath seen more dangers, nor that more often hath made trial of his person.

His death hath some affinity with that of Epaminondas, for being struck with an arrow, and attempting to pull it out, he had surely done it, but that being sharp-cutting, it hurt and weakened his hand. In that plight he earnestly requested to be carried

[1] *I. e.*, "that he could well do without."

[2] *I. e.*, In Gaul, against the Alemans and Franks.

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forth in the midst of his army, that so he might encourage his soldiers, who without him courageously maintained the battle, until such time as dark night severed the armies. He was beholden to Philosophy for a singular contempt, both of himself[1] and of all human things. He assuredly believed the eternity of souls.

In matters of religion he was vicious everywhere. He was surnamed Apostata, because he had forsaken ours; notwithstanding this opinion seems to me more likely, that he never took it to heart, but that for the obedience which he bare to the law, he dissembled till he had gotten the Empire into his hands. He was so superstitious in his, that even such as lived in his time, and were of his own religion, mocked him for it; and it was said that if he had gained the victory of the Parthians, he would have consumed the race or breed of oxen, to satisfy his sacrifices. He was also besotted with the art of soothsaying, and gave authority to all manner of prognostics. Amongst other things he spake at his death, he said he was much beholden to the gods, and greatly thanked them, that they had not suffered him to be slain suddenly or by surprise, as having long before warned him both of the place and hour of his end; nor to die of a base and easy death, more beseeming idle and effeminate persons, nor of a lingering, languishing, and dolorous death; and that they had deemed him worthy to end his life so nobly in the course of his victories and in the flower of his glory. There had before appeared a vision unto him, like unto that of

[1] Montaigne says not *himself*, but *his life*.

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Marcus Brutus, which first threatened him in Gaul, and afterward even at the point of his death, presented itself to him in Persia. The speech he is made to speak when he felt himself hurt, *Thou hast vanquished, oh Nazaræan;* or as some will have it, *Content thyself, oh Nazaræan*, would scarce have been forgotten, had it been believed of my testimonies, who being present in the army, have noted even the least motions and words at his death, no more than certain other wonders, which they annex unto it.

But to return to my theme, he had long before (as saith Marcellinus) hatched Paganism in his heart, but forsamuch as he saw all of those of his army to be Christians, he durst not discover himself. In the end, when he found himself to be sufficiently strong, and durst publish his mind, he caused the temples of his gods to be opened, and by all means endeavoured to advance idolatry. And to attain his purpose, having found in Constantinople the people very loose, and at odds with the prelates of the Christian Church, and caused them to appear before him in his palace, he instantly admonished them to appease all their civil dissensions, and every one without hindrance or fear apply themselves to follow and serve[1] religion. Which he very carefully solicited, hoping this license might increase the factions and controversies of the division, and hinder the people from growing to any unity, and by consequence from fortifying themselves against him, by reason of their concord and in one mind-agreeing intelligence: having by the cruelty of some

[1] Supply *his*.

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Christians found that there is no beast in the world so much of man to be feared as man. Lo, here his very words or very near.

Wherein this is worthy consideration, that the Emperor Julian useth the same receipt of liberty of conscience to enkindle the trouble of civil dissension, which our Kings employ to extinguish.[1] It may be said on one side that, to give faction the bridle to entertain their opinion is to scatter contention and sow division, and as it were lend to it a hand to augment and increase the same: there being no bar or obstacle of laws to bridle or hinder [2]his course. But on the other side, it might also be urged that to give factions the bridle to uphold their opinion is that by facility and ease, the ready way to modify and release them and to blunt the edge which is sharpened by rareness, novelty, and difficulty. And if for the honour of our Kings' devotion, I believe better; it is, that since they could not do as they would, they have feigned to will what they could not.[3]

[1] Montaigne says: Viennent d' employer ; *have just employed.* An allusion to the Edict of Toleration of 1582.

[2] *His, i. e.*, division's.

[3] Omit *not.*

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